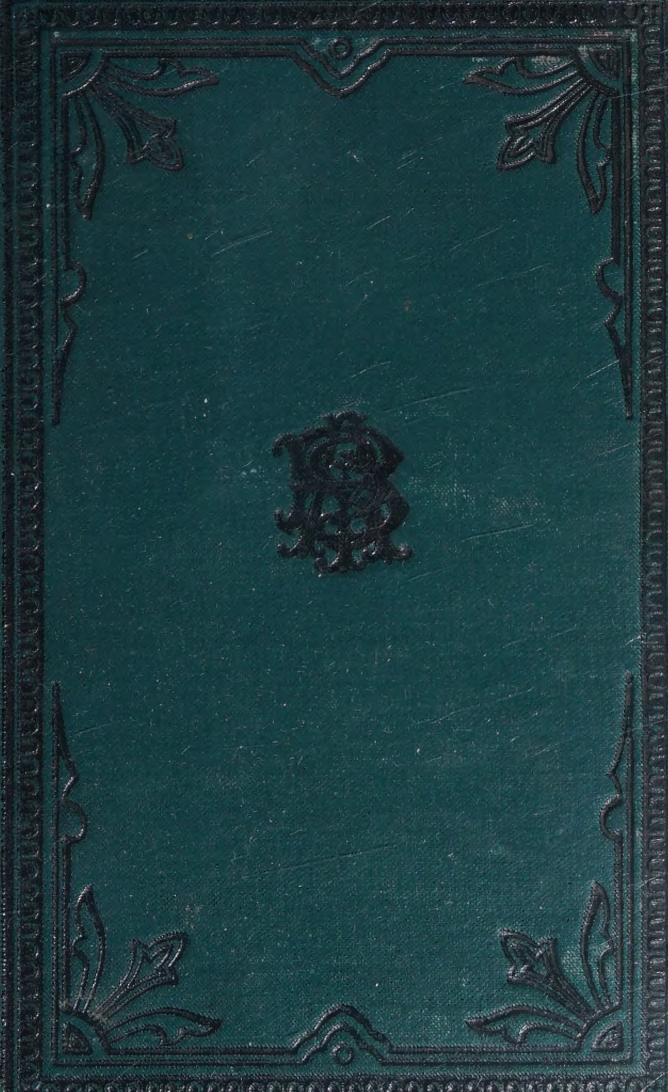




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INFANT BAPTISM

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.



REVISED AND EDITED

BY GEORGE B. IDE, D. D.

WITH AN ADDITIONAL CHAPTER BY THE EDITOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

EVERY thoughtful observer must be aware, that the present aspects of Romanism are as peculiar as they are portentous. While, as a political power, it is rapidly declining; while its presence is endured with reluctance even in Italy itself: the ascendancy of its dogmas and ceremonies, and their hold on the minds of men, seem to be strangely increasing. Withered and decrepid as a State, as an Ecclesiastical System it appears imbued with a singular and fearful vitality. Especially is this the case in Protestant lands. The dark shadow of its superstitions is seen returning over nations, from which it was once thought to have been banished forever. In England, in Scotland, on the Continent of Europe, in our own free and enlightened America, Popery is extending its influence, and multiplying its triumphs. Its cardinals and bishops tread again the soil from which the Refor-

mation expelled them. Its schools, and churches, and convents, rise in every city and village. Its gaudy processions and impious mummeries are enacted, without rebuke, in the face of heaven. It boasts its converts gathered from every class and condition, and exultingly points to the long array of "the reconciled." And while it is thus enlarging its numbers by direct accessions, it is viewed with growing favor by multitudes not of its pale. Infidels patronize it. Politicians fawn upon it. The gay and the voluptuous give it their suffrage. Mystics, enthusiasts, formalists, worldlings, all unite to countenance its pretensions, or, at least, to affirm its harmlessness. Even the professed churches of Christ oppose to it but a feeble barrier. The more corrupt fraternize with its spirit, ape its forms, and appropriate all of it but its name; while the great mass of the more pure, however disposed to resist its encroachments, seem well nigh powerless to do so.

How is this phenomenon to be explained? In what manner may we account for the startling fact, that amid the blaze of science, the spread of education the wide diffusion of intelligence, the awakened

spirit of inquiry and of progress—in lands blessed with an open Bible, a free Gospel, and all the appliances of religious instruction—an old, tottering Hierarchy, foul with pollution, laden with abhorred memories, and reeking with the blood of murdered saints, should come forth from the gloom of the dark Past, and flaunting its tattered traditions in the eyes of the nineteenth century, be welcomed and embraced? Must there not be some latent defect—some insidious weakness in the very heart of Protestantism itself, to render possible such a result? We firmly believe that there is. And we are equally confident that we know what it is. The churches, which abjured Popery at the Reformation, have retained, in the practice of infant baptism, the most vital element of Popery; the prolific germ out of which it grew; the secret principle which has engendered all its baleful fruits, and which is ever tending to reproduce them. The essence of Popery lies in the assumption, that sacraments possess an intrinsic power to confer grace; and that, consequently, those who administer them are constituted channels of intercourse and mediation between God and the souls of men

All the absurdities and abominations with which Romanism is characterized, are but developments of this central dogma; offshoots from this one poisonous root. But this also is the very core and substance of infant baptism. If its upholders do not regard it as the merest nullity—a rite as vapid and meaningless as it is unscriptural—they must ascribe to it some mysterious efficacy; some hidden and magical power; by which it influences the spiritual state of its recipients, and brings them under moral relations different from those of others. Accordingly, we find that wherever it is left to unfold itself freely—wherever it is not shorn of its natural proportions and accompaniments by contact with the advocates of primitive truth and order,—it always appears in connection with baptismal regeneration, infant church-membership, and sacramental holiness. And this is Popery.

Here, then, is the rottenness of Protestantism. Here is the weak point in her defences, which lays her open to the inroad of the foe. Here is the wily agent of the Papacy within her very intrenchments, paralyzing her strength, turning her weapons against herself, seducing her soldiers, and leading

them off to swell the hostile ranks. Never can she prosper in the struggle, till this dangerous inmate be unmasked and thrust out. As well may the stream be dried up, while the spring-head flows; as well may pestilence cease, while malaria continues to breathe its infection—as Popery die, while infant baptism lives.

In this state of the moral conflict which is going on in our own and in other lands, it has appeared to the Committee of the American Baptist Publication Society, that a reprint of the celebrated tract of Dr. Gill, entitled, “*Infant Baptism a part and pillar of Popery*,” might be eminently seasonable and useful. Its author lived in an age resembling, in some of its aspects, that in which our lot is cast. A national Church, joined in unholy wedlock with the State, and Dissent, forswearing her troth to Christ by marrying herself with Tradition, had begun to bring forth their natural progeny; and Popery grew apace. The English government became alarmed. The partisans of the Establishment trembled. All sects and orders were filled with dismay, and united in the general demand, that more stringent penalties should be enacted

against the ingress of Popish emissaries, and the propagation of Popish tenets. At this juncture, Dr. Gill, surveying the crisis with his clear eye, and fathoming its causes with his keen and deep-searching logic, lifted up his warning voice, and showed conclusively, that the source of the evil did not lie in any freedom granted to Romanists, but in infant baptism itself, which, nestled in the bosom of Protestantism, had diffused a Papal leaven through its entire body.

It seemed to the Committee, that a production so influential in its own time, and so suited to the present, deserved something better, than to be swept away on the stream of the past, or to be searched out with difficulty in the scarce and dear volumes of the author's miscellaneous works. They, therefore, resolved to revise and publish it; and appointed the writer of this notice to carry out their decision.

On examination, however, it was found that while the reasoning of the treatise was cogent, and its thoughts massive and powerful, its style was such as greatly to unfit it for general circulation. Dr. Gill, with all his immense learning, was remark-

able for his involved and slovenly mode of writing, even in an age when less heed was given than now to the graces of composition. The editor was, therefore, instructed by the Committee to make such changes in the literary execution of the work as might, in his judgment, adapt it to modern taste, and prepare it for more extensive usefulness. This, the reader is frankly apprised, has been done. While every thought and argument of the author has been scrupulously retained, and in the connection in which he placed them, the language is almost wholly new. The book has, in fact, been entirely rewritten; and, in some cases, a fuller development has been given of topics deemed too briefly stated. The editor has also verified the authorities cited; added new ones; and inserted references to later editions where they exist. In a word, he has taken down "the sword of Goliath" from "behind the ephod,"* where it hung neglected—has stripped off its mouldy covering, wiped away its rust, polished its surface, and done his best to furbish it for the battle. It is true, he might with less time and labor have made a new sword. But

* 1 Sam. xxi. 9.

then it could not be said of that, as it can be of this, "There is none like it." May it prove mighty for the Lord of Hosts, and for the overthrow of tradition and error.

G. B. L.

INFANT BAPTISM,

A

PART AND PILLAR OF POPERY.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

HAVING been called upon to maintain certain statements which, in a recent publication,¹ I advanced with respect to infant baptism, or else to retract them, I readily undertake the former; and shall, therefore, in the ensuing treatise, endeavor to explain myself, and to defend the positions then taken. With this view, it will be proper first to recite the paragraph which has been so strenuously assailed. It is as follows: “The Pedobaptists

¹ A Reply to Rev. Peter Clark's Defence of Infant Baptism.

are ever restless and uneasy, struggling to sustain, if possible, their unscriptural practice of infant baptism; although it is no other than a pillar of Popery; a corruption, by which Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations; which forms the basis of national churches and ecclesiastical establishments; and which, uniting the church and the world, binds them together so firmly, that there can never be a full separation of the one from the other, nor any thorough reform in religion, until it be wholly removed. But, although it has so long and so largely obtained, and still does obtain, yet I believe, with a firm and unshaken faith, that the time is hastening on, when it will no more be practised in the world; when churches will be formed on the model ordained by Christ, and observed by the Apostles; when the doctrines and discipline of the Gospel will be restored to their primitive purity and lustre; and when the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper will be administered as they were first delivered, clear from all the superstitious admixtures with which later times have defaced them. All this, I am persuaded, will be accomplished,

when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one."

The paragraph, thus cited, consists of several distinct propositions, which I shall endeavor, in the following chapters, to elucidate and establish. And if, in the course of the investigation, any thing should be said that may seem to savor of severity, let it be remembered that all my remarks are directed against infant baptism itself, and not against the individuals who practice it. For the evangelical denominations adhering to this custom, I cherish the highest regard. I recognize them as members of the body of Christ, and fellow heirs with the saints. I rejoice in their general advocacy of the doctrines of the Gospel; in their Christian spirit; in their unwearied labors to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. But while I love and venerate them for their many excellencies, I do not the less deplore the one error by which those excellencies are sullied. And I deplore it, not because it is fatal to their piety, and will ultimately bar them out of heaven; but because, however honestly held, it nevertheless dis-

honors the authority of the Saviour whom they profess to obey, hinders the supremacy of His laws, and counteracts their own efforts to promote it. May "the Spirit of truth" so enlighten our minds, that we shall all know and receive "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

CHAPTER II.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO POPEERY.

MY first position is, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery; and that by means of it Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over many nations.

The phrase, infant baptism, is employed here and throughout this discussion, in accordance with common usage, although properly speaking, the practice to which it is applied, should be designated infant sprinkling.

That unwritten traditions are regarded by Papists, as of equal authority in faith and practice with the Holy Scriptures, none can doubt who are at all conversant with their writings. The Council of Trent asserts, that “traditions respecting both faith and manners, orally delivered, and successively preserved in the Catholic Church, are to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence, as the Books

of the Old and New Testaments.”¹ Popish writers even prefer tradition to Scripture. Thus Bellarmine says; “The Scriptures, without tradition, are neither simply necessary nor sufficient; but unwritten traditions are necessary. Tradition alone is sufficient; but the Scriptures alone are not sufficient.”² Another of their writers affirms, that “the authority of ecclesiastical traditions is more fit than the Scriptures, to ascertain any thing doubtful, even that which may be made out from Scripture; since ecclesiastical traditions and the common opinion of the church are clearer, and more open and truly inflexible; while, on the contrary, the Scriptures have frequently much obscurity in them, and may be drawn hither and thither, like a nose of wax; and, as a leaden rule, may be applied to every impious opinion.”³ Bailey, the Jesuit, thus expresses himself. “I will go farther and say, that we have as much need of tradition as of Scripture; yea, more, because the Scripture minis-

¹ Session IV. *Decreta de Canone Scripturæ*

² *De Verbo Dei*, c. IV. Sect. 1, 6.

³ Pighius, apud Rivet. *Cathol. Orthodox. Tract I. Quest.*

ters to us only the dead and mute letter; but tradition, by means of the ministry of the church, gives us the true sense, which is not had distinctly in the Scripture. In tradition, therefore, consists the Word of God rather than in the written letter alone. It is sufficient for a good Catholic, if he understands it is tradition; nor need he inquire after any thing else.”¹

By tradition, these Popish authorities mean, not tradition handed down in the Scripture, but without it, and distinct from it; unwritten tradition, apostolical tradition, so called; tradition, not delivered by the Apostles in their writings, but, as it is pretended, communicated by word of mouth to their successors, or to the churches. That we may not mistake them, Andradius tells us, that “of necessity, those traditions also must be believed, which can be proved by no testimony of Scripture.” And Petrus a Soto still more plainly and openly affirms; “It is a rule infallible and Catholic, that whatsoever things the Church of Rome believes, holds, and keeps, which are not de-

¹Apud Rivet. p. 142.

livered in the Scriptures, the same came by tradition from the Apostles; also, all such observances and ceremonies, whose beginning, author, and origin are not known, or cannot be found, were, beyond doubt, delivered by the Apostles."¹ This is the sense which Romanists attach to Apostolical tradition.

Now, upon this assumed apostolical and ecclesiastical tradition, all the essential peculiarities of Popery are based. This is the prolific fountain from which they all spring. This is the standard to which they are all brought, and by which they are all confirmed. And what is there, be it ever so absurd or impious, that may not be proved by it, if once it be admitted as an authoritative rule? It is upon this ground, that Papists assert and maintain the observation of Easter and Lent; the adoration of images and relics; the worship of the virgin Mary; the sign of the cross; the invocation of saints; the sacrifice of the mass; transubstantiation; the withholding of the cup from the laity; holy water; ex-

See the Abstract of the History of Popery. Part II.
pp. 252, 253

lreme unction; prayers for the dead; auricular confession; the sale of pardons; purgatory; pilgrimages; monastic vows; and other superstitious opinions and practices, more numerous than we have space to mention.

Among pretended apostolical traditions, infant baptism is to be reckoned; and here lies the chief support to which its advocates appeal. Origen, who lived in the former part of the third century, and who was the first¹

¹It has been asserted by Dr. Wall and others, that Irenæus, who wrote about A. D. 178, was an advocate for infant baptism. The passage, from which this opinion has been drawn, is contained in his Treatise against Heresies, Book II. chap. 22, sect. 4. "*Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare; omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem, et infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes; in parvulis, parvulus, sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes aetatem, simul et exemplum illis pietatis effectus et justitiæ et subjectionis: in juvenibus juvenis, exemplum fiens et sanctificans Domino. Deinde et usque ad mortem pervenit, ut sit primogenitus ex mortuis, ipse primatum tenens in omnibus, princeps vitæ, prior omnium, et precedens omnes.*" "He"—that is, Christ—"came to redeem all by Himself; all, I say, who through him are regenerated unto God; infants, little children, boys, young men, and older persons. Hence, He passed through every age,

ancient writer that distinctly approved of infant baptism, represents it as a tradition

and for infants became an infant, sanctifying infants; among little children He became a little child, sanctifying those of this age, and, at the same time, presenting to them an example of piety, of uprightness, and of obedience; among young men He became a young man, that he might set them an example, and sanctify them to the Lord. Thus, He passed through even unto death, that He might be the first born from the dead, Himself holding the primacy in all things, the Prince of Life, superior to all, and preceding all."

It has been argued that Irenæus uses the expression, "regenerated unto God," as equivalent to baptism: and hence, that as he employs the phrase in connection with infants, there is here a distinct recognition of infant baptism. If this were true, it would follow that our author is incorrect in affirming that Origen was the first of the early fathers who approved infant baptism, since Irenæus lived more than half a century before him. That Dr. Gill, however, was aware of the existence of this passage, and had examined it well before he made the above statement, is proved by his own writings. In a treatise entitled, "*Infant Baptism an Innovation*," written previously to the one now reprinted, he says: "I come next to the words of Irenæus, where he says, 'Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God,' etc. In this, I shall notice only the sense of the phrase, 'born again unto God,' and the injury that is done to Irenæus, in making it signify baptism, or any thing else but the grace of regeneration. Christ and his Apostles no where

from the Apostles. The words ascribed to him are these: "For this"—that is, for ori-

call baptism by the name of the new birth; and the practice of so terming it among the ancients had not obtained in the time of Irenæus. The passage adduced from Justin Martyr does not prove it; and those cited from Tertullian and Clemens of Alexandria are too late. In Irenæus there are two passages in which it is pretended that this expression denotes baptism. The one is where he says, "*Et iterum potestatem regenerationis in Deum deus discipulis, dicebat eis: Euntes, docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti.*" "And again, giving to his disciples the power of regeneration unto God, he said, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Adv. Hæres, L. III. c. 17. By this power or commission, is meant, not authority to baptize, but authority to teach the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and its necessity to salvation, and in order to baptism. This is the first and principal part of the apostolical commission, as the order of the words show; and it is most reasonable to think, that he should so call the commission, not from its more remote and less principal part, but from its first and more important one. The other passage is where he speaks of certain heretics, as having been seduced to the denial of "the baptism of regeneration unto God." L. I. c. 21, 1. But this shows rather, that baptism and regeneration, though connected, are two different things, the former being a symbol of the latter; just as the scriptural phrase, "the baptism of repentance," means that

ginal sin—"the church has received a tradition from the Apostles, even to give baptism

baptism is something different from repentance; baptism being so called, because repentance is a prerequisite to it. For the same reason, it is called the baptism of regeneration, because regeneration is absolutely necessary to it. To all this I merely add, that Irenæus not only uses the word regeneration in a different sense from baptism elsewhere (see L. IV. c. 59, and L. V. c. 15); but in the very passage now in dispute, he most clearly uses it in another sense; since he says, "Christ came to save all who by Him are born again unto God;" *by Him*, and not by baptism. This is explained by what is said of His sanctifying all sorts of persons, infants, little ones, young men, and old men; which cannot be understood of His baptizing them; for He baptized none, and, therefore, could not be said to regenerate any in that sense. To consider Irenæus as referring here to baptism, is to make him utter a gross falsehood, viz., that Christ came to save such and such only as are baptized. Since, then, his words, without straining them, are capable of another sense agreeable to truth; as that Christ came to save all who are regenerated by His grace,—are we not bound to believe that this latter sense is his? Indeed, to depart from this clear, literal sense of his words, which contains a well-known truth, and to fix on them a figurative, improper one, which makes him say a monstrous untruth, is most cruel usage of the good old father." Gill's Tracts, Vol. II., pp. 389–392. London, 1773.

Irenæus, in the Book from which this controverted passage is taken, is arguing against the Valentinians, a

to infants.”¹ There is, however, little reason to regard the passage as genuine. A large

Gnostic sect, who denied the actual incarnation of Christ and asserted that His whole appearance on earth was a mere vision. In opposition to this destructive error, Irenæus affirms, that the divine nature of Christ entered into real and vital union with our humanity; that He was truly man, living, breathing, speaking amongst men; and that, as the human race had been alienated from God by the fall of their first head, Adam, so Christ, by becoming their second Head, had effected their restoration. In order to achieve this, He became one of them; identifying Himself with them in all their ages and conditions: comprehending within Himself, as their Representative, all classes; teaching and exemplifying the truth to all; and, by His atoning death, bringing all into a new relation to God—a state in which mercy and grace were possible. To prevent misconception, however, the qualifying statement is added, that none would actually attain the blessing of salvation by Christ, but those who should be regenerated by Him unto God; or in other words, who should experience the transforming efficacy of His blood, applied by His Spirit. I am constrained to believe, that the simple and entire meaning of Irenæus is, that Christ came to save, and would save, all truly converted persons, of whatever age or rank;

¹ “Pro hoc ecclesia apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare.” Origen, *Comment. in Epistolam ad Romanos*. VI. Tom. II. p. 543.

portion of the works of Origen has perished; and those that still exist, have, for the most part, come down to us, not in the original Greek, but in a Latin translation by Rufinus, a writer of the fourth century, by whom they are known to have been extensively interpolated. So clearly has this been ascertained, that no judicious critic will place confidence in any writing of Origen, which is to be found only in the translation of Rufinus.¹ Augustine, who was a warm advocate for infant baptism, also, defends it as a custom of the church not to be despised, and as an apostolical tradition generally received.² But as he was contemporary with Rufinus, he probably

and that, consequently, there is not the slightest allusion to baptism in the whole passage.

For similar views, though differing in some particulars, the reader may consult two very able articles; the one by Dr. Sears, in the Second Part of his Reply to Burgess on Baptism, in the *Christian Review*, Vol. III. pp. 208-213; the other by Dr. Chase, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. VI. pp. 646-656.—Ed.

¹ See Lardner, Works, Vol. II. pp. 482. 497.

² "Hoc ecclesia a majorum fide percepit." *Serm. X. de verb. apost. c. 2*; *De Genesis, Lib. X. c. 21*; and *De Baptismo contr. Donat. Lib. IV. c. 23 24*.

took the hint of infant baptism being an apostolical tradition from the Latin translation of Origen made by the latter; since no other ecclesiastical writer previously speaks of it in this manner. The uncertainty of any apostolical tradition in favor of infant baptism seems to be conceded by Jeremy Taylor, when he says,¹ “Now a tradition apostolical, if it be not consigned with a fuller testimony than of one person, whom all after ages have condemned of many errors, will obtain so little reputation amongst those who know that things have upon greater authority pretended to derive from the Apostles and yet falsely, that it will be a great argument that he is credulous and weak that shall be determined by so weak probation in matters of so great concernment.”² Yet it is by “a probation” thus “weak,” that many are “determined” in the

¹Liberty of Prophesying. Works. Vol. V. p. 552
Eden's ed. London, 1849.

² This quotation from Jeremy Taylor has not, perhaps, all the force which Dr. Gill seems to ascribe to it. The Bishop, in pleading for toleration to the Anabaptists, as he calls them, gives a summary of the arguments adduced in favor of infant baptism, and then of those which were urged against it. It is in the latter connection, that

matter of infant baptism; for not only do Popish writers, as Bellarmine and others, make it an unwritten, apostolical tradition, but even some Protestant Pedobaptists show a good will to place it among the unwritten sayings of Christ, or of his Apostles; and satisfy themselves with a supposition so gratuitous. Thus Mr. Fuller, a late Pedobaptist writer, says, "We do freely confess that there is neither express precept nor precedent in the New Testament for the baptizing of infants; yet, as St. John tells us, that Jesus did many things which were not written,¹ for aught that

the passage referred to occurs. He states it, therefore, as the opinion of the opponents of infant baptism, not as his own. A much more satisfactory admission on the same point is afforded by Neander, in his Church History, Vol. I. p. 314, Torrey's Translation. "Origen, in whose system, infant baptism could readily find its place, declares it to be an apostolical tradition; an expression, by the way, which cannot be regarded as of much weight in this age, when the inclination was so strong to trace every institution, which was considered of special importance, to the Apostles; and when so many walls of separation, hindering the freedom of prospect, had already been set up between this and the apostolic age.—Ed.

¹ John xxi. 25.

appears to the contrary, infant baptism may have been one of them.”¹ In like manner, Mr. Walker argues, “It does not follow that our Saviour gave no precept for the baptizing of infants, because no such precept is particularly expressed in Scripture : for our Saviour spoke many things to His disciples concerning the kingdom of God, both before His passion, and after His crucifixion, which are not written in the Scriptures; and who can say, but that among those many unwritten sayings of His, there might be an express precept for infant baptism?”² And Mr. Leigh, one of the disputants in the Portsmouth Discussion, suggests, that “although infant baptism is not to be found in the writings of the Apostle Paul extant in the Scriptures, yet it might be in some writings of his which are lost, and not now extant.”³ All this is plainly giving up

¹ *Infant's Advocate*, p. 71, 150. ² *Modest Plea*, p. 268.

³ *Narrative of the Portsmouth Disputation*, pp. 16–18.

We find Dr. Woods of Andover making a similar concession. In his *Lectures on Infant Baptism*, p. 11, he says, “It is a plain case, that there is no express precept respecting infant baptism in our Sacred Writings. The proof, then, that it is a divine institution must be made

infant baptism as contained in the Sacred Writings, and placing it upon unwritten, apostolical tradition; and that, too, conjectural and uncertain.

out in some other way." What can this other way mean, but tradition? It must surely be his intention to affirm that a rite was ordained by Christ, and practised by the Apostles, for which the Scriptures contain no precept. How can he know it? Whatever he may call the channel by which he professes to have received the proof of such a fact, it resolves itself into tradition; for to admit as of divine origin an institution concerning which the Bible is silent, is to give up the sufficiency of revelation, and accept the authority of tradition. Prof. Stuart, also, in the *Biblical Repository* for 1833, p. 385, says, "Commands, or plain and certain examples, in the New Testament relative to it"—that is, infant baptism—"I do not find." And Dr. Neander, in his *Planting and Training*, p. 101, declares, "As baptism was closely united with a conscious entrance on Christian communion, faith and baptism were always connected with one another; and thus it is in the highest degree probable that baptism was performed only in instances where both could meet together, and that the practice of infant baptism was unknown to the apostolic age." In his *Church History*, Vol. I., p. 311, Torrey's Translation, he makes the same admission in still stronger terms. "Baptism was at first administered only to adults, as men were accustomed to conceive baptism and faith as strictly connected. We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from

Now, infant baptism, with all the ceremonies attending it, for which also apostolical tradition is pretended, makes a very considerable figure in Popish pageantry. Romanists administer the rite with circumstances of great pomp and show; such as the consecration of the water; the presence of sponsors, who answer the interrogatories, and make the renunciation, in the name of the child; exorcisms, exsufflations, crossings, the use of salt, spittle, and oil. Before the baptism, the water is consecrated with much solemn parade. First, the priest makes an exorcism; breathing three times into the water in the figure of a cross, and saying, "I adjure thee, O creature of water!" Then he divides the water after the manner of a cross, and makes three or four crossings. Next, he takes a horn of oil, and pours it three times upon the water in the form of a cross, and makes a

apostolical institution." Now, if any trace of infant baptism were to be found in the New Testament, or in any writing pertaining to the first age of the church, it could not have escaped the searching eye of Neander, whose knowledge of primitive antiquity is admitted by all to be unsurpassed in depth and comprehensiveness.—Ed.

prayer, that the font may be sanctified, and the Eternal Trinity be present ; saying, “ Descend from heaven, and sanctify this water, and give grace and virtue, that he who is baptized according to the command of Thy Christ, may be crucified, and die, and be buried, and rise again, with Him.”

The sponsors, or sureties, then recite on behalf of the child, the creed and the Lord's prayer, renounce the devil and all his works, and answer the questions put in the name of the child. The form of interrogation and reply according to the Roman ritual, is this ; “ The name of the infant being called, the presbyter must say, Dost thou renounce Satan ? Answer, I do renounce. And all his works ? Answer, I do renounce. And all his pomps ? Answer, I do renounce.” Three times these questions are put, and three times the sureties answer. The interrogations are sometimes made by a priest, sometimes by a presbyter, and sometimes by an exorcist. The following question is also added, “ Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ?” To which the sponsors reply, “ I do believe.”

Previous to being baptized, the infant is breathed upon, and exorcised, that the wicked spirit may be driven from it, and that it may be delivered from the power of darkness, and be translated into the kingdom of Christ. The following is the formula for this part of the service prescribed by the Papal code. "Let him—the minister, priest, deacon, or exorcist—blow into the face of the person to be baptized, three times, saying, Go out, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter." That of Gregory is slightly different. "I exorcise thee, O unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou go out and depart from this servant of God."

After the infant has been exorcised and blessed, salt is put into its mouth, as a token of its being seasoned with the salt of wisdom; and as an intimation that "by the doctrines of faith, and by the gift of grace, he shall be preserved from the corruption of sin, experience a relish for good works, and be nurtured with the food of divine knowledge." The priest first blesses the salt after this manner, "I exorcise thee, O creature of salt;" and then,

having blessed it, he puts it into the mouth of the infant, saying, "Receive the salt of wisdom unto life everlasting."

The nostrils and ears of infants at their baptism are also touched with spittle by the priest, to indicate that their senses are opened to receive the savor of the knowledge of God, and to hear his commands; and that "as sight was given to the blind man mentioned in the Gospel, whom the Lord, having spread clay on his eyes, commanded to wash them in the waters of Siloam, so by the efficacy of holy baptism, a light is let in on the mind which enables it to discern heavenly truth." Formerly spittle was put upon the eyes and the tongue; but that part of the ceremony seems now to be laid aside. And yet no farther back than the birth of king James I, it appears to have been in use; since, at his baptism, his mother sent word to Hamilton, archbishop of St. Andrews, who was to officiate on the occasion, to forbear the use of spittle, saying, "She would not have a pocky priest to spit in her child's mouth." ¹ The

prelate, it was well known, had led so licentious a life, as to have become diseased through his debaucheries.¹ In queen Mary's reign, the practice seems to have been common; for when the martyr, Robert Smith, was asked by Bonner, in what particulars Papists dissented from the word of God in the administration of baptism, he answered; "First, in hallowing your water; in conjuring the same; in baptizing children with anointing and spitting in their mouths, mingled with salt; and with many other lewd ceremonies, not one point of which is able to be proved in God's order."² All of which he calls "a mingle-mangle," and "a shameful blasphemy against Christ."

Chrism is another ceremony used both before and after baptism. The parts anointed, are the breast, shoulders, and head; the breast, that no remains of the latent enemy may reside in the person baptized; the shoulders, that he may be fortified and strengthened to do good works to the glory of God; and the

¹ Vide Rivet, Animadv. in Grot. Annotat. in Cassander, Consultat, p 72.

² Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, vol. III, p. 400. Vol. VIII. p. 351. Cattley's ed., London, 1838.]

head, to denote, "that from the moment of his baptism, he is united as a member to Christ, his Head, and engrafted on his body; and that he is, therefore, called a Christian from Christ, as Christ is so called from Chrism." This anointing is made in the form of a cross. On applying it to the shoulders, the priest says, "Flee, thou unclean spirit, give honor to the living and true God." On applying it to the breast, he says, "Go out, thou unclean spirit, give place to the Holy Ghost." And when he applies it to the head, he says to the candidate, "I annoint thee with the oil of salvation, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

The next ceremony is that of signing the infant with the sign of the cross. This is made in several parts of the body, especially the forehead, eyes, and ears, to declare, that "by the mystery of baptism, the senses of the person baptized are opened and strengthened, to enable him to receive God, and to understand and observe his commandments;" and to signify that he is now consecrated by the cross to the service of Christ, and to a manful resistance against Satan. In ancient times,

honey and milk, or wine and milk, were given after baptism; though the practice has now fallen into disuse. Infants were also admitted to the Lord's supper. This custom continued for several centuries in the Latin Church, and is still preserved in the Greek Church.¹

Should the reader require proof of the use of these various observances, he may consult an able treatise "on the ancient rites and ceremonies of baptism," by Joseph Vicecomes, a learned Papist, as he is denominated by Dr. Wall; where he will find them largely treated, and the authorities for them fully cited. These ceremonies are also fully rehearsed and condemned by the ancient Waldenses, in a tract on Antichrist, supposed to have been written early in the twelfth century.²

¹ For a similar account of the baptismal ceremonies practised by Romanists, see Cramp's Text Book of Popery, pp. 122-124. London, 1839.—Ed.

² Moreland's History of the Churches of Piedmont, p. 173

To this treatise Perrin assigns the date of 1120. But as it contains quotations from the Scriptures with the division of chapters and verses; which did not come into use until the latter part of the thirteenth century; either the date is too early, or this division was afterwards introduced into it by some copyist.—Ed.

It may, perhaps, be asked, to what purpose is this account of the ceremonies observed by Papists in the administration of baptism to infants, since they are not used by Protestant Pedobaptists? I answer, it is to show what a prominent place infant baptism, with the ostentatious ritual attending it, holds in the system Popery; and that, being thus interwoven with its very structure, and contributing largely to its pomp and parade, it may with propriety be called a part of it. Besides, although the ceremonies above described are not all practiced now by any class of Protestant Pedobaptists, yet several of them are still retained by many who call themselves Protestants. Of this kind, are sponsors; the interrogations made to them, and the answers given, in the name of infants; the renunciation of the devil and all his works; and signing with the sign of the cross. And since these and the others all claim apostolical authority, and most of them, if not all, have as good and as early a pretension to it as infant baptism itself; those, who admit *that* on this footing, ought to admit *these*, its adjuncts, also. On this subject the reader is referred to a treatise

by me, entitled, *The Argument from Apostolical Tradition in favor of Infant Baptism Considered.*

Most of the ceremonies which have been mentioned, are noticed by Basil, who lived in the fourth century, as then in use, and as derived, not from Scripture, but from tradition. Speaking of the sign of the cross in baptism, he says, "We sign with the sign of the cross. Who has taught this in Scripture? We consecrate the water of baptism and the oil of unction, as well as him who receives baptism. From what Scriptures? Is it not from private and secret tradition? Moreover, the anointing with oil, what passage in Scripture teaches this? Now a man is thrice immersed; from whence is it derived or enjoined? Also the rest of what is done in baptism, as the renouncing of Satan and his angels; from what Scripture have we it? Is not this from private and secret tradition?"¹ And, in like manner, Augustine speaks of exorcisms and exsufflations in baptism, as derived from ancient tradition, and of universal use in the

¹ De Spiritu Sancto, c. 27.

church.¹ Now, whoever receives infant baptism on the ground of apostolical tradition, ought to receive these also, since they rest on precisely the same foundation.

The various ceremonies noticed above, however they may have been subsequently modified and extended, all go back to a very remote antiquity. They are coeval with infant baptism itself, and some of them even preceded it. Pedobaptism was first recognized as an established institution of the church, in the early part of the fifth century. Several doctors in the preceding century had, indeed, espoused and asserted it; and the practice had gradually spread, especially in North Africa. But it was not until the provincial council of Mileve, more correctly called the council of Carthage, held about, A. D., 418, that any canon was passed in its favor. This Bishop Taylor acknowledges.² Grotius also takes the same ground, and affirms this to be the first council in which the custom was men-

¹ De Peccato Orig. L. II. c. 40. De Nupt. et concup L. I. c. 20: L. II. c. 18.

² Liberty of Prophecyng Works, Vol. V p 552.—
Eden's ed

tioned with approbation.¹ And Augustine, in his book against the Donatists, written before the meeting of this council, while he asserts that the church had always held infant baptism, and that it was most rightly believed to have been delivered by apostolical tradition, nevertheless confesses that as yet it had not been instituted or sanctioned by the decree of any council.² What, however, had not then been done, was effected soon afterwards, and, probably, in a great degree, through his own influence. At the council mentioned above, over which he himself presided, the following canon was enacted. "Also it is our pleasure, that whosoever denies that new-born infants ought to be baptized—let him be anathema."³ The decrees of this council were sent to Pope Innocent I., and by him approved;⁴ thus identifying the then nascent Papacy with the earliest canonical sanction of infant baptism. If, then, this rite first received the authority of law from a Popish council, and was first confirmed

¹ Comment. on Matt. xix. 14.

² De Baptismo contra Donatist. L. IV. c. 24.

³ Dupin's Eccl. History Vol. I. p. 635. Dublin, 1623.

⁴ Madgeburg Centuriators, cent. V. c. 9, pp. 468, 473

as an established rule by the Pope himself, may it not well be called a part of Popery? The two are, in fact, indissolubly united—one in their origin, their growth, and their results. The same mother-heresy,—Baptismal Regeneration—which gave birth to Popery, gave birth to Infant Baptism. They were engendered in the same dark womb of ignorance and superstition. They came forth together. They grew up together. Together they overspread the nations. And together shall they disappear before the light of Christ's Gospel, and the brightness of his coming.

Further, baptism by immersion, which for thirteen hundred years was generally observed in the Latin Church, and is still universally practiced in the Greek Church, was first changed into sprinkling by the Papists. This was not a mere change in the form of baptism. It was the abrogation of baptism itself. For it is not, as some consider, a matter of indifference whether much or little water be used in baptism. Immersion belongs to the very essence of baptism, and without it, there can be no baptism. As Sir John Floyer observes, "it is no circumstance, but the very

act of baptism.”¹ The same writer also declares, that “aspersion, or sprinkling, was brought into the church by the Popish Schoolmen, and that the English Dissenters adopted it from them. The Schoolmen employed their wits to find out reasons for the alteration to sprinkling, and brought it into use in the twelfth century.”² And it must be observed, to the honor of the Church of England, that it has not established sprinkling in baptism to this day; sprinkling being permitted only when it is certified, that the child is weak, and not able to bear dipping. In all other cases, the Rubric orders the priest to dip the child warily. The legal sanction of sprinkling in Great Britain came from the Presbyterians during the civil war. The Westminster Assembly of Divines decided for sprinkling against dipping by a majority of only one; twenty-five voting for it, and twenty-four in opposition to it. On their recommendation, it was established by Act of Parliament in 1664.³ They borrowed it from Geneva;

¹ Essay to restore Dipping, p. 44.

² Ibid. ³ Ibid. pp. 12, 22.

and Geneva borrowed it from Rome. That this innovation had its rise from the authority of the Pope, Dr. Wall himself acknowledges, when he affirms that the sprinkling of infants is from Popery. "All the nations of Christians," he says, "that do now, or formerly did, submit to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, do ordinarily baptize their infants by pouring or sprinkling. And though the English received not this custom till after the decay of Popery, yet they have since received it from such neighboring nations as had begun it in the time of the Pope's power. But all other Christians in the world, who never owned the Pope's usurped power, do, and ever did, dip their infants in their ordinary use."¹ Thus does it appear that infant baptism, both with respect to its subjects, and the mode in which it is now administered, may, with great propriety, be called a part and branch of Popery.

But not only is it a part of Popery, and thus contributing to strengthen it, as a part

¹ History of Infant Baptism, Vol. II. p 414. Oxford, 1835

does the whole ; it is, moreover, its pillar and main support. It is the source from which Romanists, in contending with Protestants, draw the strongest arguments in favor of their traditions, and of the authority of the church to alter the rites of divine worship ; on which, as we have seen, the essential characteristics of Popery depend. Papal disputants sadly embarrass Protestant Pedobaptists, when they bring forward infant baptism, and urge their opponents to prove it by Scripture, both in its subjects and in its mode ; and if they cannot do this, then either to give it up entirely, or allow of unscriptural traditions and the authority of the church ; adding the perplexing question, that if they admit unwritten traditions and the custom of the church in one case, why do they reject them in others ? This way of arguing, as Mr. Stennett observes,¹ was used by Cardinal Du Perron, in his reply to king James I., and by Mr. John Ainsworth against Mr. Henry Ainsworth ; and by Fisher, the Jesuit, against archbishop Laud. An instance of the same kind, he adds, is furnished in the controversy

¹ Answer to Russen, p. 173. *et sequitar.*

between Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, and a learned anonymous writer, said to be M. De La Roque, pastor of the Reformed Church at Rouen, in Normandy. The bishop, in order to defend the withholding of the cup from the laity in the Lord's supper, according to the authority of the church, urged that infant baptism, both as to subject and mode, was unscriptural, resting solely on the authority of tradition and custom; with which, nevertheless, the pretended Reformed complied; and, therefore, why should they refuse compliance in the other case? This reasoning called forth from his antagonist the ingenuous confession, that to baptize by sprinkling was certainly an abuse, derived from the Romish Church without due examination, as well as many other things, which he and his brethren were resolved to correct. He then thanked the bishop for undeceiving them; and freely confessed that, in regard to the baptism of infants, there is nothing in the Gospel to justify the necessity of it; and that the passages produced only prove, at most, that it is permitted, or, rather, that it is not forbidden.

An amusing incident of a similar kind is

told concerning a Mr. Jeremiah Ives, a Baptist minister, famous for his talent at disputation, who lived in the time of king Charles II. The king having heard of his peculiar skill, sent for him to dispute with a Romish priest. This he did, in the presence of the king and of many others, dressed in the habit of an Episcopal clergyman. Mr. Ives pressed the priest closely, showing that to whatever antiquity Romanists pretended, their doctrines and practices could by no means be proved to be apostolical; since they are not to be found in any writings which remain of the apostolic age. The priest, after much wrangling, at last replied, that this argument of Mr. Ives was of as much force against infant baptism, as against the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. To which Mr. Ives answered, that he readily granted what he said to be true. On this, the priest broke up the conference, saying, that he had been cheated, and would proceed no farther; for he came to dispute with a clergyman of the established Church, and it was now evident, that this was an Anabaptist preacher. The behavior of **the**

priest afforded his majesty, and all present, not a little diversion.¹

As Protestant Pedobaptists are urged by this argument to admit the unwritten traditions of the Papists; so Pedobaptist Dissenters are pressed, on the same ground, to comply with those ceremonies of the Church of England, which have been retained from the Church of Rome. Dr. Whitby employs this argument with special force, when, after having pleaded for some condescension to Dissenters, in order to reconcile them to the Church, he adds; “And, on the other hand, if, notwithstanding the evidence produced, that baptism by immersion is suitable to the institution both of our Lord and His Apostles, and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ; and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life, as the Apostle clearly maintains the meaning of that rite;² if, I say, notwithstanding this, **all our Dissenters**”—Pedobaptist Dissenters he must mean—“do agree to sprinkle the bap-

¹ Crosby's Hist. of the Baptists, Vol. IV. pp. 247, 248.

² Rom. vi. 3-6.

tized infant; why may they not as well submit to the significant ceremonies imposed by our Church? For, since it is as lawful to add to Christ's institutions a significant ceremony, as to diminish a significant ceremony which He or His Apostles instituted, and use another in its stead, which they never did institute; what reason can they have to do the latter, and yet refuse submission to the former? And why should not the peace and union of the church be as prevailing with them, to perform the one, as is their mercy to the infant's body, to neglect the other?"¹ Thus infant baptism is used as the grand plea for compliance with the ceremonies both of the Church of Rome and the Church of England. It is, therefore, the chief prop of these Antichristian Hierarchies—the final appeal to which they resort for countenance in their unscriptural practices. And so triumphant is this appeal, that no Pedobaptist Protestant or Dissenter has ever been able to stand before it.

Further, it is by means of infant baptism that "the Man of Sin" has spread his baneful influence over many nations. This is abun-

¹ Protestant Reconciler, p. 289.

dantly evident from the fact, that through the christening of children, introduced by him, he has made whole nations nominally Christian, and has applied to them the designation of Christendom; thus extending the limits of his universal church, over which, as the pretended Vicar of Christ on earth, he claims absolute power and authority. By the same means, he retains his influence over these nations, keeps them in awe of his spiritual prerogatives, and holds them in servile subjection to his will. With this view, he sedulously inculcates the pernicious dogma, that, by their baptism, received in infancy, they are brought into the fold of the church, within which there is salvation, and out of which there is none; and that, therefore, if they renounce their baptism, or apostatize from the church, they consign themselves to inevitable damnation. Thus, by his menaces and anathemas, he maintains his usurped dominion over the submissive and trembling nations. And if, at any time, one of these nations has courage to oppose him, and to act in disobedience to his mandates, he immediately lays it under an interdict; suspending the sacraments, all public prayers, burials,

and christenings; closing the churches; and forbidding the clergy to administer their functions to any but those who, at a great price, purchase the privilege from Rome.¹ By a superstitious dread of these prohibitions, particularly that which withholds baptism from children, nations are induced to comply with the demands of the Papal power, however oppressive and tyrannical they may be. For it appears most dreadful to parents, that their children should be deprived of baptism, by which, as they are taught to believe, they are made Christians, and without which there is no salvation. Hence whole kingdoms have been known to yield to the most arbitrary exactions of Rome, rather than lose what is deemed so very important. What a tremendous influence, therefore, must infant baptism give to Popery; and how cunningly is it adapted to uphold its power.

But the baneful influence, which Antichrist has extended over the nations, through infant baptism, is yet further seen in that poisonous

¹ Abstract of the History of Popery, Part I. p. 463.
Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. 1. p. 326.

notion, propagated by him, that the sacraments, and especially baptism, confer grace by their intrinsic efficacy; "ex opere operato" from the mere fact of their administration. In other words, he has taught that baptism takes away sin, regenerates men, and saves their souls. This is charged upon him by the ancient Waldenses, in the treatise on Antichrist, to which I have already referred. Speaking of the corruptions of the Papal Hierarchy, they say: "The third work of Antichrist consists in this, that he attributes the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit to the dead, outward act of baptism. In this faith, he baptizes children, teaching that salvation is thus to be obtained. On this ground, he confers orders and other sacraments; and thereon builds all his Christianity. All which is against the Holy Spirit."¹

The same Popish notion is argued against and exposed by Robert Smith, the martyr, in his examination before Bonner. In reply to a statement of the latter, that "infants are damned, if they die without being baptized,"

¹ Morland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedmont. p. 148.

he asked this question; "I pray, you, my lord, show me, are we saved by water or by Christ?" To which Bonner answered, "By both." "Then," said Smith, "the water died for our sins, and so must ye say that the water hath life, and it being our servant, and created for us, is our Saviour. This, my lord, is a good doctrine, is it not?"¹

The leaven of this old and destructive error yet remains even in some Protestant churches, which have retained it from Rome. Hence a child, when baptized, is declared to be regenerate, and thanks are returned to God, that it is regenerate. And when it is capable of being catechised, it is taught to say that, in its baptism, it was made a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Such instruction cannot but have a powerful tendency to take off all concern from persons when grown up, respecting any vital change of heart, as necessary to prepare them for heaven; and to encourage in them the fatal presumption, that, notwithstanding their evident want of grace, they yet

¹ Fox's Acts and Monuments, folio, Vol. III, p. 400
[Vol. VII. p. 352, Cattley's edition, London, 1838.]

are members of Christ, and shall never perish—are children and heirs of God, and, therefore, must certainly inherit eternal life. The father of lies himself, as Dr. Owen justly observes,¹ could not have devised a more pernicious doctrine, or one more calculated to insure the final ruin of the soul. If, then, through infant baptism, this fatal heresy reigns supreme in lands Papal, and is still widely diffused and powerful in lands Protestant, are we not warranted in saying, that by means of infant baptism Antichrist has spread his baneful influence over the nations?

¹ *Theologoumena*, L. VI. c. III. p. 477.

E. Scofield,

CHAPTER III.

RELATION OF INFANT BAPTISM TO CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

NOTHING can be more evident than that infant baptism is the basis of national churches, and, therefore, the parent of all the mischiefs which arise from the unhallowed union of the spiritual and the profane in the same religious community. If a church be national, it is of course, composed of all the men, women, and children in the nation, who have not voluntarily withdrawn from it. Of such a church children are originally members, either by birth, and as soon as they are born, being born in the church; that is, in a Christian country, which is the church; or rather by baptism, as it is generally expressed. Thus, according to the order of the Episcopal Church, at the baptism of a child, the minister says, "We receive this child into the congregation of

Christ's flock."¹ By the Assembly of Divines, baptism is called "a sacrament of the New Testament, whereby the parties baptized, are solemnly admitted into the visible church."² Of this the following explanation is given in the next answer of the Catechism, in which the general proposition, though correct, is virtually nullified by the exception made in the case of infants, who form a large majority of the baptized. "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers to the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and their obedience to Him; but infants, descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized."³ Calvin, according to whose plan of church government at Geneva that of the Scotch Church was modeled, denominates baptism "a solemn introduction into the church of God." And Mr. Baxter argues, that "if there be neither precept nor example of admitting church members in all the New

¹ Liturgy of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

² Larger Catechism, p. 337. ³ Ibid. p. 338.

Testament but by baptism, then all that are now admitted ought to come in by baptism. But there is neither precept nor example in all the New Testament of admitting church members but by baptism. Therefore, they ought to come in the same way now." So then infants, becoming members of a national church by baptism, are originally of it, and constitute the materials of which it is composed. It is, in fact, by the baptism of infants, that a national church is supplied with members, and is supported and maintained. Hence, it may be truly said, that infant baptism is the foundation of a national church, and is, indeed, the very sinews, strength, and life of it. And infants, having been thus admitted members by baptism, continue such when grown up, even though most dissolute in their conduct, as multitudes of them are. Many, instead of being treated as church members, deserve to be sent to the House of Correction—a punishment which some of them receive; and others are guilty of such flagitious crimes, that they die an infamous death. Yet even these die in the communion of the church.

And thus the church and the world are united and kept together till death doth them part

The Independents, according to their principles, would indeed separate the church and the world. But, in practice, they cannot do it, being fettered and hampered by infant baptism and infant membership. The embarrassment which this subject occasions them, appears from the great diversity of opinions which they entertain respecting it, and from the endless inconsistencies in which it involves them. They seem sadly at a loss what to do with infant baptism, or where to place it. Some place it on the interest of the infant in the covenant of grace. But here they often contradict themselves and one another. At one time they say it is interest in the covenant of grace which gives infants a right to baptism; at another, that it is by baptism they are brought into the covenant; and then again, that it is not in the inward part of the covenant that they are interested, but only in its external part, where hypocrites and graceless persons may be; but what that external part is, no mortal can tell. Others, not feeling so certain that their infant seed, as such, are

all interested in the covenant of grace, say it is not that, but the church covenant into which godly parents enter, which gives their children with them a right to church membership and baptism. Children in their minority, it is said, covenant with their parents, and so become church members, and this entitles them to baptism;¹ for, according to the original theory of the Puritans of New England, none but members of a visible church were to be baptized;² though Dr. Godwin is of a different opinion.³ Hence only such as were children of parents in regular connection with the church were admitted to baptism.⁴ In the case of excommunicated members, the children born during the period of their excommunication, might not be baptized.⁵ Children, when baptized, were not considered confirmed members, until they

¹ Disputation concerning church members and their children at Boston, p. 12, 13. Hooker's survey of Church Discipline, Part III., pp. 24, 25.

² Cotton's Way of the Churches in New England, p. 81. Boston Disputation, p. 4. Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 115.

³ Government of the Churches of Christ, p. 337.

⁴ Defence of the Nine Propositions, p. 69.

⁵ Cotton's Way, p. 85.

professed faith and repentance;¹ yet, during their minority which, after the example of Ishmael, reached till they were about sixteen years of age, they were regarded as real members to such intents and purposes, that if their parents were dismissed to other churches, their names were to be inserted with them in the letters of dismission.² They were also viewed, while their minority continued, as under the watch and care of the church, and subject to its admonitions and censures, with a view to their moral correction and improvement;³ though not in such a way as to render them liable to public discipline and excommunication.⁴

The original Puritans thought, that by the covenant seed, who have a right to baptism and church membership, were meant only the seed of parents in immediate fellowship with the church, and not of progenitors more remote.⁵ Mr. Cotton says, "Infants cannot claim right to baptism but in the right of one

¹ Cotton's Holiness of church members, p. 19. Boston Disputation, p. 3.

² Ibid. p. 15. ³ Cambridge Platform, p. 18.

⁴ Boston Disputation, p. 14. ⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

of their parents or both ; where neither of the parents can claim right to the Lord's supper, there their infants cannot claim right to baptism."¹ Afterwards, however, he qualifies this statement by observing, "It may be considered, whether the children may not be baptized, where either the grandfather or grandmother have made profession of their faith and repentance before the church, and are still living to undertake for the christian education of the child ; or if these fail, what hinders but that if the parents will resign their infant to be educated in the house of any godly member of the church, the child may be lawfully baptized in the right of its household governor."² But Mr. Hooker asserts, that "since children as children have no right to baptism, it belongs not to any predecessors, whether near or remote, to confer a right to this privilege."³ In the term, predecessors he includes all except the parents themselves, such as grand parents, great grand parents, etc. Thus, too, the ministers and messengers

¹ Cotton's Way of Churches, p. 81. ² Ibid. 115.

³ Survey of Church Discipline, part III. p. 13.

of the Congregational Churches that met at the Savoy, declare, that "not only those, who do actually possess faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, are to be baptized; but also infants, one or both of whose parents are believers, are to be admitted to the ordinance, and those only."¹

Among the commissioners appointed to review the Book of Common Prayer, in the beginning of the reign of Charles II., those of the Presbyterian persuasion brought forward the following motion: "Whereas, there are divers learned, pious, and peaceable ministers, who judge it unlawful to baptize not only children whose parents are atheists, infidels, heretics, or unbaptized, but also such whose parents are excommunicated persons, fornicators, or otherwise notorious and scandalous sinners; we desire that they may not be enforced to baptize the children of such, until they have made an open profession of their repentance before baptism."² At the present day, however, the churches of this denomination, except in a few instances, do not adhere

¹ Declaration of Faith and Order. Chap. xxix. p 48.

² Proceedings of the Commissioners, p. 22.

to the principles and practices of their predecessors ; but admit to baptism, not only the children of church members, but of those who are not ; and, indeed, the children of any, whether religious or irreligious, who may apply to them for that purpose.¹

But supposing that, in all cases, none but the children of parents in full communion with the church were admitted to baptism—would this remedy the evil ? What are such children ? No better than others. Like all others, they are born in sin, carnal and depraved. They belong to the world, notwithstanding their religious parentage, until they are called out of it by the effectual grace of God. As they grow up, they show themselves to be of the world, living in accordance with its principles, and manifesting the same sinful and corrupt nature which others exhibit. Some of them even become grossly immoral. Yet no notice is taken of them in the way of censure or expulsion ; but they retain their membership,

¹ This must be understood as having special reference to the Presbyterians of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It is not true, at least in its full extent, of this excellent denomination of Christians in our own country.—ED

into which they were brought in their infancy, and continue in it to the day of their death. And if this be not uniting and keeping the church and the world together, I know not what is.¹

The support which infant baptism lends to worldly and national churches, is moreover

¹ Who can estimate the mischiefs which have sprung from such a union? What incalculable injury has been done to the souls of those, who have thus been trained up in the persuasion, that, by their baptism in infancy, they are incorporated into the Church of Christ, invested with a special interest in the covenant of Grace, and made the peculiar objects of the Divine favor! And what immense evils have thereby been inflicted on the cause of the Saviour! How has the lustre of His Gospel been dimmed, its strength weakened, and its progress delayed! And how has His blood-bought Church, ordained by Him to be the fold of His sheep—the home of the renewed—in the world, but not of it—been robbed of its true function, by being converted into a common receptacle for the pure and the impure; a great drag-net, inclosing all alike! Infant baptism tends directly to amalgamate the church with the world. It fills it with secular elements; subjects it to the control of unregenerate men; surrounds it, where circumstances are favorable, with civil endowments, patronage, and power; and thus transforms the Bride of Christ into the bedizened courtesan of the State!—Ed.

evident from the fact that it practically nullifies all the arguments, which are commonly adduced to show their unscriptural character. It is said, and said truly, in opposition to such organizations, that the members of a visible church are represented in the New Testament as “a spiritual seed”—“lively stones,”—“called to be saints”—such as, in the judgment of enlightened charity, may be accounted sincere believers. But are baptized infants of this description? The holiness attributed to them, is only a federal holiness, and that altogether chimerical. Are they saints by effectual calling? Can they, on scriptural grounds, be deemed holy? Do they possess the qualities which, in the New Testament, are invariably ascribed to church members? And if they cannot, even in the widest charity, be regarded as saints, and yet are admitted by baptism into the church, why may not others be so admitted, of whom it cannot be declared that they are regenerate persons?

Besides it is correctly affirmed by the Independents, that members of Gospel churches are not only such as have been called by the Spirit of God, but such as manifest their obe-

dience to that calling by a corresponding profession and conduct; such, moreover, as are known to each other by their confession of faith wrought in them by divine power; and such as willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the Gospel.¹ Now do infants possess this character? Do they evince, by an outward profession and walk, their obedience to a divine inward call? If they do not, and yet are received as church members, why may not others be so received, who give no more evidence than they do? Do they make a confession of faith wrought in them? Does it appear that they have such a faith? And is a confession made, and so made, as to be known by their fellow members? If not, and yet they are received and owned as members, then why may not others be so recognized, who make no more confession than they do? Do infants consent to walk with the church of Christ, and give up themselves to

¹ Savoy—Declaration, p. 57.

the Lord and to one another, and profess to be subject to the ordinances of the Gospel? If they do not, as most certainly they do not, and yet are acknowledged as members, why may not others be acknowledged as members on the same footing? Is it objected to a national church, that persons of the worst characters are members of it, and that by this means the church is filled with men very disreputable and scandalous in their lives? And is not this true of those in congregational churches, who, admitted as members in their infancy, when grown up are very wicked and immoral, and yet their membership continues? Why, then, may not national churches be tolerated, notwithstanding the above objections? From all these reasons, therefore, I deem myself fully warranted in saying, that there cannot be a complete separation of the church from the world, nor any thorough reformation in religion, until infant baptism is wholly removed.

CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF PEDOBAPTISM ON PROTESTANT
CHURCHES HISTORICALLY DEVELOPED.[BY THE EDITOR.¹]

A SEARCHING inquiry into the effects of infant baptism on Protestant communities, would furnish most instructive, though painful results. Such an investigation, impartially conducted, would soon show, that this corruption, wherever it is not restrained by antagonistic causes, always tends to Romanism, or to Rationalism. In some soils, and under some influences, it

¹At the period when Dr. Gill wrote, the influence of Pedobaptism on the churches of the Reformation had only begun to show itself. That influence has since been much more fully manifested. The editor was, therefore requested to prepare and insert a chapter on this subject, containing the substance of what we may well suppose Dr. Gill would have said, had he lived in our day and seen what we have seen. As the chapter thus prepared is closely related to the preceding argument, and depends upon it, it was thought better to publish it in this connection than in an independent form.— Ed.

becomes the prolific seed of all that is most baleful in the Papal system. Such was its development in the ancient church. Germinating first in North Africa, the hot-bed of superstition and asceticism, it was quickly transplanted into Egypt, where it thrived luxuriantly among the dreamy speculatists of Alexandria. Thence it spread throughout the Eastern and Western empires, growing up, side by side, with reverence for the outward and the tangible in religion; the love of imposing ceremonies; the adoration of saints and relics; the worship of images; prelatie power, and priestly domination; until, at length, the Roman Hierarchy, propped and buttressed by infant baptism, cast its shadow over the nations.

Similar has been its tendency in the Church of England. At the period of the Reformation, the aspect of this Church was, in some respects, bright with promise. Her creed was, in the main, eminently evangelical. Her early teachers were men of great scriptural knowledge, of fervent piety, and unblemished lives. A large portion of her laity was also pervaded by a growing love for a pure Gospel. But

while she abjured the supremacy of Rome, abolished the mass, and purged out the grosser abominations of Popery; yet, by adhering to infant baptism, with its natural concomitants, Episcopacy, and a State-Establishment, she retained a principle which was calculated to undo all her work, and revive within her own communion the most essential characteristics of the "Man of Sin." The sphere, in which this insidious leaven was thus left to operate, was particularly fitted to develop its influence. The national mind of England, either from constitutional structure, or the long schooling of circumstances, has a strong papistic element. Sturdy and independent in matters of civil polity, it evinces a strange propensity to be led in religion. It bows to authority. It trembles before august names, and lofty pretensions. It is fond of pomp and external show. It venerates the time-honored, the far-descended. In such a state of society, infant baptism found a congenial home, and free scope to work out its Popish tendencies. And how successfully it has done so, the present religious position of that country clearly shows. The land which, around the martyr-

fires of Smithfield, swore eternal hatred to Popery, is now full of Popish dignitaries, Popish priests, and Popish proselytes. The Church, for which reformers toiled, and confessors bled, is Papal all but in name. There are, indeed, many pious, evangelical men still within her pale; and the echoes of the Reformation have not yet wholly died away in her sanctuaries. But the spirit that animates her, the impulses which guide her, the doctrines and ceremonies which she best loves, bear throughout the unmistakable features of Romanism. Shocked by the introduction of dogmas and rites, wearing the abhorred livery of Antichrist, Gospel Truth, and vital Faith, and Scriptural Piety, are forsaking her altars, saying, "Let us depart; this is not our rest; it is polluted." It is true, that she now manifests much alarm and exasperation at the bold encroachments of the Papacy, and is rousing herself to resist its endeavors to get possession of her island-throne. But there is no opposition to the principles of Romanism involved in the struggle. It is simply a contest between two kindred Hierarchies, the one seeking to extrude or absorb the other. It is

the Mother striving to unseat the Daughter. The sole question at issue is, whether Pius IX. or Victoria I. shall be Pope of England. The Pontiff of the seven-hilled City longs to wrest the crosier from the Pontiff of Buckingham Palace; and the latter, like a true woman, has no intention of resigning her power. Here is the whole pith of the controversy. The bishops and clergy of the English Church, while they are straining every nerve to preserve her from the clutches of Rome, have no wish to purify her from the tenets of Rome. They are willing enough to trade in Popish wares, only they prefer to do it on their own account.

To such a state of lamentable depravation has one of the fairest jewels of Protestant Christendom been brought by the deteriorating presence of infant baptism. This has been "the dead fly in the ointment," that has sullied her purity, and tainted her fragrance. This it is which, breaking down the fence between her and the world, and letting in upon her all its ungodliness, has filled her once green and nourishing pastures with goats instead of sheep, with wolves instead of shep-

herds. This it is, which has changed her wholesome teachings into soul-destroying errors, transformed her worship into a beggarly imitation of Popish vanities, and reduced her whole Christianity to the mere observance of forms and sacraments. Such a church may continue to be Protestant in name; but, in essence, it is completely Romanized.

An example of the workings of infant baptism in a direction different, indeed, but equally mischievous, may be seen in the theological history of Germany. Luther rolled off from the great truths of the Gospel the mass of perversions with which ages of Papal darkness had overlaid them. He brought out into clear light, and firmly established the cardinal doctrines of Atonement, of Justification by Faith, of Sanctification by the Spirit. He reformed much, but not enough to render the Reformation secure. And it is even a question whether he did more good by what he took away, or more evil by what he allowed to remain. In his ecclesiastical system, he left infant baptism, and infant membership; thus opening the church to the world, and uniting it with the State. He either did not perceive

their unscriptural character, or deemed them comparatively harmless. Devoting his whole strength to clearing the rubbish from great principles, he judged it of little importance to remove the corruptions of an outward rite. But in this his wisdom resembles that of an architect, who should lay a broad and deep foundation, and erect upon it a massive and lofty structure; while, at the same time, he leaves unnoticed a small stream flowing silently beneath it, that must inevitably sap the very ground on which it stands. Thus has it been with the work of Luther. The little rill of infant baptism, welling out from its Papal fountain, has slowly undermined the fabric which he reared, and virtually overturned it. For two centuries, indeed, the doctrines which he taught were rigidly maintained. But they were held merely as a dead letter—a theological creed, for which men would buckle on the armor of controversy, but which had no place in their hearts, and no influence over their lives. This could not last. There came, at length, a change over the public mind; a breaking away from old paths of thought, and a reckless pushing into new ones. The Church

was ill prepared for the crisis. She was thoroughly secularized. The world reveled and rioted in her bosom. The great majority of her members were unconverted. Even her pastors and theological professors were, in most instances, entirely destitute of any experimental acquaintance with the power of Christianity. Such could have no inward witness of the truth of the Gospel, and no illumination of the Spirit, to guide them in their inquiries. Hence, led by unsanctified reason, and a sceptical philosophy, they plunged into the wildest and most dangerous speculations. Nothing was regarded by them as proved. Their daring criticism strove to rend and dislocate the Bible; to show that large portions of it were mere forgeries; that the idea of its divine inspiration was but an enthusiastic dream; and that the entire histories of our Lord and of His Apostles were only pious myths. And this state of things has continued, until the Church of Luther—the eldest daughter of the Reformation—has now, to a great extent, become a church of baptized unbelievers, crowded, in all her departments, with men who, while partaking her ordinances, and

filling her offices, laugh her doctrines to scorn, and assail the authority of the very Scriptures from which they preach. Here and there, it is true, one of her sons may be seen struggling to oppose the rushing tide of infidelity, and lifting up his voice amid the Babel-clamor of rationalistic sects. But its tones are feeble and uncertain; he himself is not free from infection; and, in spite of his weak resistance, the pestilence strides on.

As these sceptical views are thus embraced and advocated by the appointed expounders of Christianity, it might well be expected that they would obtain wide currency among the people themselves. And such is the fact. In Germany, all belong to the church, having been baptized into it in their infancy, and afterwards confirmed in their membership, when old enough to pronounce the Creed, and recite the Catechism. In this vast and promiscuous mass, some few may be found who manifest vital religion, appearing, among the multitude of the ungodly, like solitary travellers, walking amidst huge catacombs of the dead. With the exception of these, the entire body of German Protestants may be distributed into two

grand classes—formalists and rationalists. The first profess a profound veneration for Lutheranism, as the religion of their fathers and of their fatherland. They cling, with superstitious tenacity, to its symbols and formularies, and display a bigoted attachment to its ritual observances. This, with an occasional attendance at public worship, and a participation in the Lord's supper once or twice in their lives, comprises the whole of their Christianity. The other class, though still retaining their connection with the church, do not pretend even to a speculative belief in the truth of the Gospel. They are infidels of every type and color, from the neologist who denies the divine authority of Revelation, to the pantheist who, by deifying Nature, would annihilate God. This, unhappily, is now the popular class in Germany.

From these causes the most disastrous results have followed. Real piety is well nigh extinct. Worldliness, scepticism, and contempt for all sacred things, everywhere predominate. The people flock to demoralizing and infidel lectures, while the temples of God are deserted, and the Sabbath is turned into a carni-

val. The Lutheran Church, once so living and vigorous, is now a putrefying carcass, sending out poisonous exhalations over her own and other lands. This even her own writers admit. Tholuck,—who, though an eminently spiritual man, is yet a strong advocate for the ecclesiastical system, of which he is so distinguished an ornament, and who, therefore, cannot be suspected of painting it in too dark a hue,—has given us the following graphic description of its present state and character. “A huge corpse—stiff, cold, and livid. What in many of its parts appears like life, is but the life of the corruption itself, by which those parts are dissolving. Only here and there, among its dying members, is there a living one, that with difficulty averts death from itself, or seeks to infuse fresh life into the dead portions around it.”¹

¹ “Einen grossen Leichnam—starr, kalt und bleich; was in vielen seiner Glieder als Leben erscheint, es ist das Leben der Verwesung selbst, das seine Glieder auflöst; nur mitten unter sterbenden Gliedern noch hie und da ein lebendiges, das mit Mühe den Tod von sich abwehrt, oder Lebensfrische in die erstorbenen Theile um sich her zu verbreiten sucht.”

Tholuck. *Pro-Bogen*, Band I. s. 25, Hamburg, 1843.

And what has brought the Protestant Christianity of Germany into such a deplorable condition? Infant baptism. This, by throwing down the barrier with which Christ has environed his church, admitting into her enclosure the unregenerate and profane, and even installing them in her seats of instruction, has produced all these direful evils. Will it be said, that in the present depraved state of humanity, communities might easily be pervaded by an irreligious and infidel spirit, even if infant baptism had never existed? We grant it. But then the destructive element would be without the church—not, as in this case, within it. However high the tide of ungodliness may rise, all is safe while the church preserves the model ordained by its Divine Founder. Planted on the Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, it presents an embankment to the swelling waves, which breaks their force, and rolls them harmless back. In a pure church there dwells a recuperative power, that can renovate the most degenerate lands. Living and spiritual—in the world, yet distinct from the world—it acts as a correcting and restoring

agent, reproving iniquity, confounding unbelief, and holding forth the word of life to a reckless and profligate generation. But if its own light become darkness, how great is that darkness! When the church itself engenders the disease, when its own bosom is the fountain which sends out the contagion—then the last hope disappears. Such a church cannot be reformed. It must be taken down, and give place to one built on a scriptural foundation, or the land which its presence blights, must sink, beyond recovery, into the gulf of corruption.

It may, perhaps, be affirmed, that the moral leprosy with which Lutheranism is infected, has arisen, not from infant baptism, but from certain doctrinal errors in her creed. To this Geneva gives the answer, by showing that even the most rigid orthodoxy cannot long remain pure, in connection with a practice which amalgamates the church and the world. Calvin, still more than Luther, founded his system deeply and broadly on the fundamental verities of the Gospel. But, like Luther, he left the initiatory ordinance unreformed, and thus mingled together the heterogeneous mate-

rials of regenerate and unregenerate. By this single oversight, the city where he taught, and which, illuminated by his doctrine, was once a blazing centre of light—a spiritual Pharos, cheering and guiding the faithful in all lands—has been covered with the black night of Socinianism; her radiance quenched; her voices of truth hushed; and the very pulpit in which her adored reformer preached, polluted by lips that deny the divinity of the Son of God, and the renewing agency of His Spirit. And it is a remarkable fact, and one which bears strongly on the present discussion, that the only bright spot which now shines amid her darkness, was not kindled by any successor of Calvin, but by a member of that body of Christians, whose prominent peculiarity is a rejection of the baptismal dogma which Calvin inculcated. It was through the instrumentality of Robert Haldane, a Baptist from Scotland, that D'Aubigné and his coadjutors were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and incited to the holy labor of proclaiming an uncorrupted Gospel. Thus the solitary fire that burns in Geneva was lighted by a Baptist

hand; and even this infant baptism will speedily extinguish, if it be not itself destroyed.

But a still more striking instance of the pernicious effects of this custom, is furnished by the history of our own country. Never had infant baptism a fairer field, in which to prove whether there be any good in it, than among the Puritan churches of New England. The early founders of these churches had cast off the fetters of a tyrannical Hierarchy in the old world; and although they were not entirely purified from the mischievous notion of the connection of religion with civil government, yet they brought with them to their new home views respecting the spiritual nature of Christian communities, and the simplicity of Christian worship, much more correct than those which were generally entertained in that age. They were men profoundly read in the Scriptures, of great faith and zeal, and of exemplary holiness. Since the days of the Apostles, the world has never seen a band of Christians more pure-minded, more self-denied, more conversant with heavenly things. Their situation, too, removed them far from the corrupting contact of other less evangelical societies,

They were alone in the wilderness, with themselves, their offspring, and their God. Surely then, if infant baptism could ever "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," it would have been here. Let us, then, trace its workings in this secluded position.

The original colonists of New England held that the visible church of Christ consisted of professed believers and their infant seed; that the latter being born in the church, had a right to baptism; and that, from their relation to the church, they were subject to its watch and discipline. This relation, however, was regarded as a modified one, not entitling the baptized child to the full privileges of membership, and to a participation in the Lord's supper, until he should give evidence of genuine conversion. The anomalous state in which their offspring were thus placed—neither in the church nor out of it—greatly troubled these excellent men, as it ever has and ever will all who hold such unscriptural notions. In process of time, the children of the first settlers grew up, and became themselves heads of families. Many of these still remained unregenerate. It was, therefore, a

very nice and perplexing matter to determine the true position, with respect to the church, of those who, having been baptized in infancy, did not manifest repentance and faith on their arrival at adult years. Equally difficult was it to settle the point whether the children of such ought to be baptized. These questions occasioned much solicitude, and called forth not a little discussion, throughout the colonies. The diversity of opinion, and consequent agitation, at length became so great, that, by the request of the magistrates of Connecticut, the controverted subjects were laid before an assembly of ministers convened at Boston, June 4, 1657. After deliberating fifteen days, they gave the following decision: "That it is the duty of infants who confederate in their parents, when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's supper, to own the covenant which they made with their parents, by entering into it in their own persons. And it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof; and if, being called upon, they shall refuse the performance of this great duty, or otherwise continue scandalous, they are liable to be oen-

sured for the same by the church. And in case they understand the grounds of religion, and are not scandalous, and solemnly cown the covenant in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them, we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children.”¹

This decision was not received with entire unanimity. Many looked upon it as an innovation, calculated to lead to very evil consequences. The disputes and contentions respecting it grew at last to be so violent, that a General Synod was deemed necessary, in order to secure peace and uniformity of practice in the churches. Such a body, called by the order of the General Court, met at Boston, in the year 1662. In due time, the fruits of their wisdom appeared in the shape of the following Propositions.

1. “They that, according to Scripture, are members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism.

2. The members of the visible church, according to Scripture, are confederate believers,

¹ Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 63.

in particular churches, and their infant seed, that is, children in their minority, whose next parents, one or both, are in covenant.

3. The infant seed of confederate visible believers are members of the same church with their parents, and when grown up are personally under the watch, discipline and government of that church.

4. These adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are, and continue to be members, without such further qualifications as the word of God requireth thereto.

5. Church members who were admitted in minority, understanding the doctrine of faith, and publicly professing their assent thereto, not scandalous in life, and solemnly owning the covenant before the church, wherein they give up themselves and their children to the Lord, and subject themselves to the government of Christ in the church, their children are to be baptized.”¹

These propositions having been submitted to the General Court, an order was passed by it, October 8, 1662, commending them to all

¹ Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 64.

the churches in the jurisdiction.¹ Thus backed by the civil authority, the decision of the Synod was soon generally acquiesced in by the New England churches.

In this manner arose the celebrated "Half-Way Covenant," according to which, persons making no profession of a change of heart, if they only exhibited a fair outward morality, were permitted and required, on the ground of their baptism in infancy, to appear before the church, recognize their connection with it, acknowledge their covenant obligations, and bring their children to baptism. Thus was the door opened to let the world into the church. Thus, within about forty years after the landing of the Pilgrims, and while the patriarchs of the May-Flower were scarcely dead, the original strictness of their discipline was so far changed as to admit an arrangement, which virtually effaces the separating line between the holy and the unholy, between the conscious subjects of renewing grace, and the votaries of earthliness and sin. And this rapid deterioration was caused by infant baptism. Had it not been for its existence and influ-

¹ Mather's *Magnalia*, Book V. p. 64.

ence, the offspring of believers, while unregenerate, would have been viewed as belonging, where they actually do belong, to "them that are without;" as sustaining no relation to the church different from that of other impenitent persons; and as deriving from their religious parentage only the privilege—a precious one indeed—of being the special objects of Christian solicitude, instruction, and prayer. But as such children were supposed, in consequence of their baptism, to hold some undefined and impalpable place in the church, the inconsistency of so regarding them, and yet practically treating them as in the world, greatly disturbed these Puritan Fathers, as it has their descendants ever since. Hence they devised a plan by which baptized adults, who were still unconverted, might be brought away from the court of the Gentiles, and be made, at least, to confess themselves proselytes of the gate. Another reason which led them to this course, was the erroneous idea which they entertained—an idea growing out of infant baptism—that it was the particular appointment of God to perpetuate his kingdom on earth by hereditary descent. When, therefore, they saw their

children arriving at maturity, and becoming themselves parents, without possessing that spiritual character which would fit them to take their place at the Lord's table, they became greatly alarmed for the continuance of religion in future times.¹ To guard against this danger, they resolved that their sons and daughters, if not prepared to make a full profession, should, at any rate, make half of one, and so far own the covenant as to bring their infants within it; in this manner serving as a sort of intermediate conductors to convey the faith of the grand parents to the grand children, and thus securing the transmission of grace to posterity.

The corrupt principle contained in this measure, and the evils which resulted from it, cannot be described more forcibly than they have been by the eloquent Dr. Wisner, who, as a Pedobaptist, cannot be supposed to have overdrawn the picture. "Persons were permitted to come and make, in the most solemn circumstances, the most solemn of all professions, when they did not regard themselves, and were not regarded by others, as having at all in

¹ Mather's Magnalia, Book V. p. 68.

heart given themselves away to God, and trusted in Christ, and yielded themselves up to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. And as to the promises which were annexed, of educating children in the fear of the Lord, and submitting to the discipline of the church, on the one hand, and of watchful care on the other, they too soon came to be alike disregarded, both by those who exacted and by those who made them. Parents did not, and soon were not expected, to fulfill their engagements, in form so solemn and significant; and churches did not, and soon were not expected to fulfill theirs. Thus the most solemn and impressive acts of religion came to be regarded as unmeaning ceremonies; the form only to be thought important, while the substance was overlooked, and rapidly passing away."¹

It was not to be expected that the evil would stop here. The progress of degeneracy is ever more decided and rapid, the longer it continues. It is like the letting out of imprisoned waters, which rush along with a force and volume constantly increasing. Accordingly, the same writer thus graphically records the

¹ Wisner's History of the Old South Church

consequences to which it soon led. “And now another and still more fatal step was taken in this downward course. Why should such a difference be made between the two Christian sacraments, which reason infers from the nature of the case, and the Scriptures clearly determine, require precisely the same qualifications? If persons were qualified to make, in order to come to one ordinance, the very same profession, both in meaning and in terms, required to come to the other, why should they be excluded from that other? The practical result, every one sees, would be, that if the innovation already made were not abandoned, another would speedily be introduced. And such was the fact. Correct moral deportment, with a profession of correct doctrinal opinions, and a desire for regeneration, came to be regarded as the only qualification for admission to the communion. This innovation, though not as yet publicly advocated by any, there is conclusive proof had become quite extensive in practice previously to 1679. The churches soon came to consist, very considerably, in many places, of unregenerate persons—of those who regarded themselves, and were re-

garded by others, as unregenerate. Of all these things the consequence was, that within thirty years after the commencement of the eighteenth century, a large portion of the clergy, through the country, were either only speculatively correct, or to some extent actually erroneous in their religious opinions, maintaining regularly the forms of religion, but in some instances having well nigh lost, and in others, it is to be feared, having never felt, its power."¹

To such a state had the Puritan churches of New England been brought by infant baptism, within a single century. Silently but surely it had done its work, sapping successively the safeguards of truth and purity, until by the abandonment of the principle, that none but "living stones" should be incorporated into the house of God, the last defence gave way, and a torrent of corruption flowed in. The world emptied itself into the church. There was, in fact, no longer any world. It was all church. Everywhere men avowedly unconverted belonged to her communion, presided over her interests, served at her altars. With

¹ Wisner's History, etc.

a membership and ministry thus alike carnal, it was not to be supposed that she would retain, for any length of time, even a theoretical belief in the grand teachings of revelation. These, however, were not at once repudiated. The forms of faith, which have become fixed in a community, do not suddenly pass away. Truth leaves the heart and the lips long before it leaves the creed. For a considerable period, therefore, a dead, leaden orthodoxy hung over New England, hiding, like a shroud, the rotteness beneath. But this could not continue. An incipient change began to be perceived. The distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel were not, indeed, denounced and opposed. They were passed over. While still keeping their place in Confessions and Articles, they were quietly dismissed from the Pulpit, to make room for moral essays, and panegyrics on the beauty of natural virtue. The downward process, having gone thus far, must go farther. Men are never satisfied with what is merely negative. They demand the positive; and when once they have discarded positive truth, their next step is to embrace positive error. Hence, we find that as early as the

middle of the last century, opinions involving a denial of the proper divinity of Christ, the depravity of human nature, the need of atonement, and the work of the Spirit in regeneration, were extensively adopted in Massachusetts. Advocated at first by some prominent ministers of Boston, they spread for fifty years through the country, pervading the graceless clergy and the still more graceless laity; until, the season of incubation having expired, the monstrous egg broke at last, and the great Unitarian Apostacy stood revealed in all its hideousness.

Now, we affirm that this most disastrous consummation was the direct result of infant baptism. It was the product of a series of agencies of which infant baptism was the beginning and author. Its proximate cause is doubtless to be found in the practices growing out of the half way Covenant. But what originated the half way Covenant? Would this strange device have ever seen the light, had it not been for the illicit union of the church with infant baptism? Do not all the writers of that period expressly declare, that its sole purpose was to induce irreligious parents, who

had been baptized in infancy, to make a formal recognition of the covenant, so that their children might be brought to the font, and thus infant baptism be perpetuated? Without infant baptism, such a measure would never have been dreamed of, nor could the slightest pretence have been set up for its adoption. Infant baptism, then, we say again, is the original and real parent of New England Unitarianism.

And as in *Genova*, so here, the first check given to the rampant heresy came from those who had never acknowledged Pedobaptism. When the banner of an insulted Christ lay soiled and trampled in the dust, the venerated Stillman and Baldwin caught it up, and waving it abroad in the breeze, sent the war-cry of Immanuel echoing over all the hills and vallies of New England; until the few, "faithful found among the faithless," had time to rally and make head against the overwhelming defection. A Pedobaptist historian very candidly informs us, that "at the beginning of the present century, all the Congregational churches in Boston, with a single exception, had renounced the faith of the Puritans. The

Old South still stood upon the platform of the fathers, though her pastor was a semi-Arian. But when the enemy came in like a flood, the Lord lifted up a standard against him. In the year 1803, the Baptist churches in the city were visited with a precious revival, in which the Old South shared to some extent."¹ A few of the members of this Church, occasionally worshipping with the Baptists, became revived, and established a prayer meeting among themselves; from which a renovating movement commenced, that has been the origin of all the Orthodox Congregational Churches with which the City of the Pilgrims is now blessed. Thus when infant baptism had put out the fire on all its own altars, with the exception of one solitary shrine, and had caused it even there to burn dim and low; the flame was kindled again from altars which this unscriptural rite had never been suffered to profane. And while, amid the Egyptian darkness that settled down over the Pedobaptists in Boston, the Baptists, in their Goshen at the North End,² thus walked in

¹ Moore's Boston Revivals, p. 28.

² The part of the city in which the Baptist churches were located.

unclouded light, and showed themselves valiant for the truth; so, throughout the land, feeble and scattered as they were, they stood firm by the cause of their Master. Though thousands around were casting off the authority of Jesus, not a man of them wavered in his allegiance. From all their places of worship the ensign of the cross streamed out undepressed and untarnished; and from all their pulpits the Godhead of Christ, and the sovereign efficacy of His blood, were distinctly and earnestly proclaimed. To the memory of these brave-hearted men justice may never be done in this world. But we doubt not, that in the great day of decision, when all events and instrumentalities shall be placed in their true light, it will appear that to the Baptists of Massachusetts belongs the honor of having been the first to arrest the overflowing scourge; that they were the Abdiels who remained faithful in the midst of revolted multitudes; that it was they, who, when all seemed lost, threw themselves, single-handed, into the van of the battle, and held the field against fearful odds, until, behind their sheltering front, the broken ranks of Orthodoxy were formed anew. Peace

to the ashes of these Christian heroes! May their names and their deeds be precious to New England, as they are already blessed in heaven!

The great facts, which have been thus briefly reviewed, are full of instruction. They teach us, with the truth and certainty of history, that infant baptism, whenever operating without restraint, will inevitably corrupt the communities that uphold it. Either, by introducing the dogma of baptismal regeneration, and attributing saving virtue to outward forms, it will develop itself into essential Romanism; or, by admitting the unregenerate into the church, and joining together what God has put asunder, it will prepare the way for a dead and soulless Faith, soon to be quickened into a living Infidelity. Whichever direction it takes, and in whatever shape its influence is displayed, it is "evil, only evil, and that continually." We cannot but regard it as the most pernicious heresy which has ever sullied the primitive simplicity of the Gospel. We are constrained to believe, that, directly or indirectly, it has done more than all other corruptions combined, to pollute Christianity, to

enfeeble her power, and to keep back the hour of her final triumph. It is, in fact, the origin of most of these corruptions,—the source from which they have sprung, and by which they are constantly fed. In a word, we look upon it as the most dangerous element that now exists in the Church. And it is all the more dangerous from the slow and insidious manner in which it accomplishes its results. Were it to stand out in open day, with its real nature and tendencies fully revealed, the whole host of God's people would rise up to banish it from the earth. But it acts silently and covertly, reaching its ends by steps so circuitous, and by a progress so imperceptible, that the consequences are not seen till the catastrophe comes; and even then they are referred, not to the primal cause, but to some one of the intermediate agencies which it has set in motion.

To the views here expressed it may be objected, that there are several denominations of Christians in this country, who practice infant baptism, and yet maintain evangelical sentiments, and exhibit an evangelical spirit. This is cheerfully admitted. Nevertheless, it does

not shake our confidence in the soundness of the position we have taken. In these denominations, infant baptism is not allowed its free and natural development. It is restricted and hemmed in by a counteracting power. And this power goes out from the Baptist Churches. While claiming no superiority over their evangelical sisters, in general correctness of doctrine, or purity of Christian character; they do claim—and Scripture sustains the claim—that, on the particular subject of baptism, they alone hold the truth; and what they firmly believe, they fearlessly declare. By their constantly increasing numbers; by their almost universal diffusion; by the scriptural and even self-evident nature of their principles,—a wide public opinion has been created unfavorable to infant baptism. This prevailing sentiment acts not on Baptists alone; nor on those only who are immediately under their influence. It affects all classes. It penetrates even the guarded inclosure of Pedobaptist churches, producing an unconfessed, but ever active distrust of an institution, to which the Bible lends no sanction. This is shown by the sad complainings which

are uttered in certain quarters, respecting the diminution in the number of baptized children, and the difficulty of persuading parents to comply with a custom, for which they can find neither precept nor example in the Word of God. In some sections, indeed, the practice seems rapidly falling in desuetude. And were ministers and theological teachers to cease striving to uphold, by their bare authority, a rite which they never have proved, and never can prove, to be of divine appointment, the masses would soon lay it aside altogether.

Thus circumscribed and impeded, infant baptism does not display its full character and tendency. Born in the twilight of superstition, it puts forth all its energies for evil only when surrounded by its native element. Under the noon-day of truth which Baptists are now pouring upon it, its eyes are dazzled; it becomes torpid; its huge limbs shrivel up; it assumes the shrunken form of a mere act of "symbolic dedication;" even some of its friends begin to treat it as a small affair, and almost to ignore it.

Yet, even in this shorn and crippled state, it

is neither dead nor harmless. It must, under any circumstances, operate as a fatal injury, or a gross injustice, to those on whom it is administered. If, as they grow up, it lead them, as it naturally may, to suppose themselves in a peculiar relation to God, bearing the seal of His covenant, and set apart as His special property; it will inevitably render them secure in their impenitence, under the persuasion that by virtue of their baptism they shall certainly obtain grace at last; and thus it will prove the direct means of their everlasting destruction. Or if, in spite of this delusive impression, the divine Spirit should reach their hearts, convince them of their lost condition, and bring them to Christ; then it will act as an unrighteous bond to withhold them from duty. A ceremony, in which they bore no conscious share; vows, made by others in their name, without their consent or knowledge—will be urged as arguments to prevent them from obeying the plain command of the Saviour, first to believe, and then to be baptized. In both these cases, infant baptism is a flagrant wrong. In the one, it is a snare to the soul; in the other, a trap to the conscience.

But this is not the only evil which it is producing, at the present day, among the Pedobaptist communities of our own land. In some directions, its old Popish leaven is busily working. Already, through its operation, a large portion of the Episcopal denomination has become essentially Romanized, both in spirit and in practice. And in certain sections of the Presbyterian body, views are advanced with respect to its efficacy, and the moral position of its subjects, which involve the very germ of Popery. No—infant baptism has not lost its venom under the bright sun of the nineteenth century, and in the free air of republican America. And if it does not, at last, render this country Papal or infidel, it will be owing, under God, to the resistance it meets with from the Baptist churches. Let their light be withdrawn, and a few generations would see our now broad and happy land covered with spiritual darkness, rotting beneath the stagnant waters of Formalism, or swept by the wild waves of a God-denying Liberalism.

One more great truth has been evolved by our inquiries. It is, that when Christian bodies,

retaining infant baptism, become corrupt, they have no inherent power to throw off the contaminating influence, and spring forth into new life. If a church, built on the apostolical basis of admitting to membership only the avowedly regenerate, should in process of time be debased by the intrusion of secular ingredients, it has the element of restoration within itself. The remedy lies in a recurrence to its own first principles; in the enforcement of that fundamental law of its constitution, which requires, that God's spiritual house should be composed of spiritual materials alone. But it is widely different with a Pedobaptist church. It can derive no help from a resort to its first principles. These first principles have done all the mischief. The regarding it as an elementary rule, that the church of Christ consists of believers and their unconverted seed, thus mingling together the "lively stones" of the sanctuary, and "the wood, hay, and stubble" of the world—has been the very well-spring of the corruption which overspreads it. How, then, can it put away this corruption, while its source remains? Such a result is clearly impossible. It may manifest occasional

~~amendment~~. There may be in its history intervals of revival and of comparative purity. But they will be partial and evanescent. The same prolific fountain will continue to send out its streams to deluge and pollute it anew. For such a church there is no alternative but to renounce its first principles, and adopt the platform of the Bible, or sink, at length, in irreclaimable degeneracy. The history of the world does not furnish an instance of a Pedobaptist church, remaining such, that has radically and permanently reformed itself. The Church of England has not done it, and never can do it. She must cease her unholy alliance with the State; she must cease to admit to her communion the worldly and the profane; in other words, she must cease to be Pedobaptist—cease to be herself—and be transmuted into a new, spiritual church, modeled according to the pattern of the Gospel—before the Spirit of Holiness will revisit her tabernacles. The Church of Germany has not done it, and never can do it. All the learning, and piety, and zeal of the noble band of evangelical men, that are now rising up in her midst, will never dispel the gangrene from her vitals, unless the

cause be removed, by the removal of infant baptism, and its attendant evils. There may be, in particular spots, signs of spasmodic life; and here and there individuals may be found who appear truly awake to the concerns of eternity. But over the great body of her communion, Death will still reign in all the intensity of its power. It is not from a church so sunk in the mire of secularity, that the redemption of Germany is to come. The day of that redemption is indeed dawning; but its beams emanate not from the lecture-rooms of the universities, nor from the pulpits of endowed cathedrals. It is from the little companies of baptized believers, gathered by Oncken, and Köbner, and Lehmann, that there goes forth over the land of Luther and Melancthon, the morning light of a second Reformation; a Reformation which shall be complete, as the first was partial, and which shall overthrow the citadel of darkness, as that did its outworks. So it has been, and so it will be ever. The records of every century since infant baptism arose, corroborate the statement, that communities, plunged by it into moral decay, never recover by any impulse

from within. The energy, which shall fully reanimate them, must come from without; and even then the result can be perfectly secured, only by taking their whole frame-work in pieces, and reconstructing it on a scriptural basis.

For evangelical Pedobaptists, of whatever name, we cherish the most fraternal feelings. We salute them as brethren in Christ. We know them to be devoted, heart and soul, to the same holy Cause, in which we humbly toil. We believe that they desire, with a sincerity and earnestness unsurpassed by our own, the abolition of every form of superstition and unbelief, and the spread of a pure Gospel throughout the earth. But, at the same time, we are solemnly convinced, that so long as they cling to infant baptism, they can never see these ends entirely accomplished. How can they hope to demolish Romanism, while they strive to perpetuate, in their own organizations, the very key-stone of its whole system; the chief instrument which brought it into being, and which will inevitably build it up again, the same in substance, if not in name? Or how can they look for ultimate

triumph in the conflict with infidelity, if they cherish among themselves a traitor, that, fast as they can drive one army from the field, will bring a fresh one into it? This is but the labor of Sisyphus repeated. The stone of victory, rolled almost to the mountain-top, will rebound and fall back into the abyss. Such efforts, to be successful, must begin at the foundation. The axe must be laid at the root. Infant Baptism—that old Upas tree, which, with its death-distilling branches, Ungodly Church-Membership, State-Religions, Prelacy, Popery, and Scepticism, has for fourteen centuries shaded and blasted the world—must come down, before the pure light of Heaven, and the sweet breath of Life, can circulate freely over the expanse of our darkened and diseased humanity.

How momentous is the part assigned to those who hold the ordinances of Christ as He delivered them! We cannot doubt that it is the purpose of God to introduce, through their instrumentality, that general return to primitive order, which is to herald the crowning conquests of the Gospel. From the time of the first departure from apostolical purity,

even down through all the darkest eras of the subsequent Apostacy, there has always been a succession of men, who, abjuring all communion with Rome, have, under different names, and in different countries, kept the word and the testimony of Jesus. And the rapid growth, in our own day, of the true descendants of these ancient witnesses, their advanced position, their disciplined array, their increasing influence and resources, furnish significant indications, that their great work is soon to be achieved. What a solemn mission is theirs! How do the coming destinies of the church and of the world hang upon it! Their principles must prevail, or tradition, imposture, and infidelity will still hold the field. Their banner must wave from every tower and battlement of Zion, or final victory can never be hers. May "the Captain of Salvation" give them grace to fulfill the trust committed to their hands.

CHAPTER V.

CERTAIN EXTINCTION OF INFANT BAPTISM.

It is true, that from the fifth century until now, this pernicious error has held sway over the greater part of those who have borne the Christian name; bringing with it all the corruptions of doctrine and of discipline which inevitably follow in its train. It is also true, that, though its power has been checked, and its hold on the public mind weakened, it is still widely prevalent; substituting, throughout whole nations, a mere nominal Christianity for the pure and life-living Gospel; propping up time-worn abuses; and retarding the moral emancipation of the world. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the time is hastening on, when, strongly intrenched as it now is in the superstitious veneration of the masses, and upheld, from interested motives, by lordly priests and bloated hierarchies, it shall be ut-

terly and forever extirpated. The Scriptures teem with the delightful announcement, that a day shall yet dawn on the earth, when Christianity shall not only universally prevail, but shall be wholly freed from the numerous perversions by which its energies have been impaired, and its beauty disfigured. In that predicted period, "the Man of Sin" shall be destroyed, and every trace and relic of his influence be swept away. The doctrines of the Gospel will shine out in their primal lustre, and its ordinances again be restored to apostolical purity and simplicity. Christ "shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and His name one."¹ In other words, "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," shall be acknowledged and received by all Christians: and there shall be a universal agreement with respect both to the inward essence and the outward institutions of the Gospel. In this glorious reign of truth and holiness—the "latter day," which inspiration promises, and for which every pious heart must fervently long—infant baptism will no

¹ Zech. xiv. 9.

more be practiced, but will vanish and be forgotten, as the shadows of the morning twilight melt before the risen sun. This I most confidently believe. As firmly as I believe that the Gospel shall yet subdue the world, so firmly do I believe that, in the consummation of its triumphs, infant baptism, with every other antichristian custom, will be driven out of the church, and be cast into the same bottomless pit with the Beast and the false prophet. The reasons on which my belief is founded, are partially implied in the statements above made. It may be desirable however, that I should adduce them more particularly, and at greater length.

I believe this, because, in the time referred to, churches will be formed on the same model with those in the days of the Apostles. That this will be the case, is clearly manifest from the teachings of prophecy. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin; and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The City of Righteous-

ness.”¹ “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me.”² “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testament.”³ Now the apostolical churches contained only baptized believers, or such persons, and such alone, as had by baptism made a public profession of their faith. The church at Jerusalem—the first Christian Church that was instituted—consisted of the Apostles and others who had been converted and baptized during the ministry of our Lord; and then of those who, on the day of Pentecost and subsequently received the truth, and were added by baptism, to the company of the disciples.⁴ The next Christian Church was at Samaria; and this was composed of men and women, who were baptized on believing the Gospel preached by

Isa i. 25, 26

² Jer. xxx. 18, 20.³ Rev. xi. 19.⁴ Acts ii. 41: iv. 4.

Philip.¹ The Church at Corinth consisted of those who, having heard the word from the lips of Paul, believed and were baptized.² Of similar converts were the Churches at Rome, Philippi, and Colosse composed. In all the New Testament, not a single instance of infant baptism nor of infant membership is recorded, or even intimated. Nor is there the slightest hint that any were ever received into churches, who had not been baptized on a personal profession of their faith. If therefore, such was the apostolical constitution of the Church; and if, in the latter day, this constitution is to be restored; it follows that infant baptism will then be no more practiced.

I believe this, because the ordinances of the Gospel will then be administered as they were originally appointed, free from all the present intermixtures of superstition and corruption. Such I consider to be the meaning of that vision of the Apocalypse—*the opening of the temple of God in Heaven*³—seen by St. John immediately after the sounding of the seventh trumpet. I interpret this as a symbolical an-

¹ Acts viii. 12.

² Acts xviii. 8.

³ Rev. xi. 19: xv. 5.

nouncement of the restoration of the worship, doctrines, discipline, and ordinances of the Gospel to their free use, and to their primitive purity. In the coming era of scriptural light and knowledge, “the tabernacle of the testimony”—the pure truth of God—so long shut up by ecclesiastical tyranny, or hidden behind the veil of perversions and false glosses, will be thrown wide open, revealing its treasures to every eye, and filling every mind with its heavenly radiance. In this broad and bright illumination, every form of error will shrink away, and be annihilated. The teachings of the Gospel will be rightly understood, and cordially embraced. The Lord’s supper will be administered, clear of all the corruptions and ceremonies, introduced into it by Papists, and retained by Protestants. In like manner, the ordinance of baptism will be purified and brought back to the scriptural model. In the first ages of Christianity, it was administered to believers alone, and by immersion only. So will it be in the future age of renovation. Of course, then, infant sprinkling will be practiced no more.

I believe this, because Christ will then be

King over all the earth in a spiritual sense; the one Lord whose commands will be obeyed with great precision and exactness, as they are made known in His Word. Among the commands which He has given, baptism is included; and as he will be acknowledged the one Lord and Head of the Church,—and not the Pope, whose power will then be ended—there will be one Baptism, which will be administered to one class of subjects only, and by immersion only—the one mode which He has ordained in His statutes, and confirmed by his example. Infant sprinkling, therefore, will be practiced no more.

I believe **this**, because, in the advancing period of Zion's glory, the *name* of Christ, that is, His religion, will be one and the same in every part of the world. In spirit, in doctrine, in form, it will be precisely what it was when it came, all stainless and living, from its Divine Founder. Now it appears various, discordant, even contradictory, owing to the different manner in which it is professed and exhibited. But in the latter day, it will be uniform and harmonious in all its branches, as embraced, felt and manifested by all Christians

And as baptism is a part of Christ's religion, this also will be observed in a uniform manner by all who bear Christ's name. For since the name of Christ, or the Christian religion in all its parts, will be the same in all who profess it; I, therefore, am firmly persuaded, that baptism will be practiced alike by all, according to its primitive institution; and, consequently, that infant sprinkling will be forever abolished.

I believe this, because, in the latter day, "the watchmen of Zion will see eye to eye."¹ As the appointed teachers of Christianity will be of one mind, with respect both to its doctrines and its duties, and will alike preach the one, and practice the other; so the people, under their ministrations, will be all of the same belief; receiving the truths of the Gospel in the love of them, and submitting to its precepts and institutions, without any difference among themselves, and without any variation from the word of God. There will then no longer be any strife about baptism. All will agree, that its proper subjects are believers, and its right mode immersion. Thus infant

¹ Isa lii. 8.

sprinkling will no more be contended for; and Christians will in all things serve the Lord with one consent.¹

Another reason why I firmly believe that infant baptism will hereafter entirely cease, is, because Antichrist will be utterly consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.² In other words, Romanism, with all kindred systems of falsehood and impiety, will be annihilated by the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, when Christ shall come to take to Himself His power, and reign spiritually in the churches, in a manner more glorious than He has ever yet done. Then all antichristian doctrines and practices will be entirely abolished, even the whole body of antichristian worship. Not a limb of Antichrist shall remain, but all be consumed. Now as I fully believe, and think it has been clearly shown, that infant baptism is a part and pillar of Popery, a limb of Antichrist, a branch of superstition and will-worship, introduced by the Man of Sin,—when he shall be destroyed, this shall be destroyed with him.

¹ Zep. iii. 9.

² 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Nor am I shaken in this belief by the fact, that, in various ages, wise and good men have embraced and practiced infant baptism. It is a part of "the wood, hay, and stubble," laid by them upon the foundation. It is one of those works of theirs—the product of human device and invention—which the bright day of the Gospel shall declare to be a falsehood; and which the fire of the word will try, burn up, and consume, though they themselves shall be saved. And, therefore, being utterly consumed, it shall no more appear in the world.

When the angel, foretold in the Apocalypse, shall descend from heaven with great power to proclaim the fall of spiritual Babylon, the whole earth shall be lightened with his glory.¹ Before the blazing splendor of truth, that will surround his path, all darkness shall be removed, and all works of darkness be made manifest and cast off—among which infant baptism is one. Then shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.² That is, the knowledge of the word, ways, worship, truths, and ordinances

¹ Rev. xviii. 1, 2.

² Isa. xi. 9.

of God, shall universally prevail ; and all ignorance, misconception, or abuse of them be banished forever. The ordinance of baptism will then be disentangled from the mass of traditions which have so long encumbered it, and appear once more in its native lustre. It will be observed in strict accordance with its original mode and design, and every corruption of it be scrupulously rejected. Hence, as infant baptism is such a corruption, it will, in that day, be abhorred and cast away.

Since we are taught in Scripture, that the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are to continue until the coming of Christ at the end of the world;¹ and since these ordinances have been greatly and very generally corrupted ; it is not reasonable to suppose that their Divine Author will allow them always to remain in this deformed and vitiated state ; but that in the spiritual reign of Christ—the blissful period that is to usher in His final Advent,—every perversion which has been made of their intent, and every addition or curtailment which has marred their inspired model, will be scattered, like chaff, before the might

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

of the triumphant Gospel. And as in relation to baptism, there must be, on the one side or the other, a mistake with respect both to its subjects and its mode; and as I am thoroughly persuaded that this mistake exists on the side of the Pedobaptists; so I as firmly believe, for the reason given, that it will be removed, and infant sprinkling be no more used.

The time when this happy consummation will take place, is that predicted in the message to the church at Philadelphia,¹ whose state I regard as emblematical of the spiritual reign of Christ in the latter day. In this conclusion I am confirmed by the character given of that church and of its members. It is described as having kept the word of Christ; and this, I conceive, prefigures the conduct of Christians in the millennial age; when not only will the doctrines of the Gospel be purely preached and openly professed, but its ordinances also, baptism and the Lord's supper, which,—especially baptism,—have been sadly corrupted in almost all former periods except the apostolic, will be restored to their pristine purity and glory. Hence it is promised to this church,

¹ Rev. iii. 7–12.

and through it to the churches of that future era which it represents, that because it had truly and faithfully kept the word of Christ's patience, it should be delivered from the hour of temptation which should come upon all the earth. It is also exhorted to hold fast what it had, and to maintain both doctrines and ordinances as they were delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and as it now held them in their primitive simplicity and incorruptness.¹

¹This interpretation of the learned author will not bear the test of sober criticism. The Apostle John was instructed by our Lord to address a message to the church in Philadelphia—a church existing in his own time, and in the region which had been the principal scene of his own labors. In this message, allusion is made to the state and character of the church, and to recent events in its history. Its steadfastness and fidelity are commended; and a promise is given to it of triumph over the Judaical party, by whose factious conduct its peace, in common with that of all the early churches, had been greatly disturbed. Then follows the animating assurance of preservation in the approaching hour of temptation, which should come upon all the world; by which is undoubtedly meant one of those severe and general persecutions which took place under the Roman emperors. Now that there is much in this message instructive and profitable to Christians in all ages, as well as to those to whom it was primarily directed, none will deny. But to

These are the principal reasons why I believe, with a strong and unwavering faith, that the time is coming, and I trust is not far off, when infant baptism, with its numerous progeny of baleful influences and results, will be banished from the earth, no more to pollute the fair face of Christianity, and no more to deceive the souls of men.

In our own times, a great and just alarm is felt at the rapid increase of Popery, and the spread of principles kindred with it, and tending to its propagation. The Beast seems recovering from his deadly wound,¹ and with invigorated energies, is preparing for a last effort

convert it into a prophecy, and make it, in fact, a symbol of one of the grand epochs in the unfolding destinies of the Gospel,—when not the slightest hint of such an application is contained in the message itself,—is a mode of expounding Scripture altogether arbitrary and fanciful. It is unquestionably true, that the universal prevalence of Christianity is the subject of numerous scriptural predictions; and that, in the period of their fulfilment, the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel will be purely held and kept. But it is not true that the state of the Philadelphian Church was designed by the Holy Spirit to be a prophetic emblem of **that** period.—Ed.

¹ Rev. xiii. 3, 12.

to regain the mastery of the world; while the numberless bands of his auxiliaries and satellites—Baptismal Regeneration, Sacramental Efficacy, Formalism, Mysticism, and Political Intrigue—in diverse array, and with motley banners, are mustering, thick and fast, to the onset. Every thing betokens the coming on of the final struggle between the powers of Light and of Darkness. This combat Protestantism is in no condition to meet successfully. By retaining Infant Baptism, she keeps in her very citadel the chief supporter and prime minister of the foe; insidiously sapping her strength, betraying her defences, spiking her artillery, and waiting but for a fitting moment to lay her, prostrate and helpless, at the feet of her victorious enemy. Down with the traitor! Tear off his disguise, and lay bare beneath it the uniform of the Papacy! Wash his painted face, and read on his brow “the mark of the Beast.” Thus detected and renounced send him back to the camp of Antichrist, where he belongs. Then, and not till then, may the Protestant host, united under the broad standard of “the truth as it is in Jesus,” formed in Gospel order, and moving on to the

exulting war-cry, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," hope to scatter the forces of Superstition and Falsehood, and bear the uplifted ensign of Salvation in triumph over the world.

REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A BAPTIST:

TOGETHER WITH

A Farewell Letter to his late Charge.

BY REV. S. REMINGTON, A. M.,

"I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say."



PHILADELPHIA:

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

1420 CHESTNUT STREET.

Lowell, March 2d, 1846.

DEAR BROTHER—Believing that the reasons assigned by you, for becoming a Baptist are eminently scriptural, and that their general circulation would promote the cause of truth, we, your brethren in the ministry, respectfully invite you to commit your interesting work to the press.

Affectionately yours, in the service of Christ,

LEMUEL PORTER.

IRA PERSON,

DANIEL C. EDDY,

D. BURROUGHS,

J. BALLARD.

REV. S. REMINGTON.

Lowell, March 3d, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN—As I desire to promote the cause of truth, and as you think the publication of my “Reasons for becoming a Baptist” may contribute to it, I therefore accede to your request,—praying that the Great Head of the Church may give it his sanction.

With great respect, Rev. brethren, I am happy to subscribe myself your fellow-laborer in the best of causes.

S. REMINGTON.

REV. LEMUEL PORTER, &c.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by the

AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, in
and for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A BAPTIST.

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”—*Matt.* 28 : 19, 20.

THE word “therefore” refers to the preceding text, in which Jesus Christ asserts his authority to rule and regulate his church ; to appoint his ministers, and to give them their appropriate commission, so that all their doings may be done in his name and by his authority. Hence he says—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” “Go ye therefore”—

You will observe the order of their commission—To teach, baptize, and then build up the church on her most holy faith—and his promise is to be with all such to the end of the world.

They are, then, first to teach all nations what they must do to be saved, and bap-

tize all that believe. See Mark 16 : 15, 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Then secondly, having introduced them into the church of God by the rite of baptism, the command is—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." By this means they are to become established Christians, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

The main point which invites our attention upon this occasion, is Baptism.

What is the mode, and who are the proper subjects of Christian baptism? are questions upon which the Christian world have been, and still are, divided.

The Baptists tell us that believers are the only subjects, and immersion the only true mode of administering the ordinance, while Pedo-baptists contend that infants ought to be baptized, and that sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, are equally valid.

There are points, however, upon which both parties generally agree,—that baptism is a gospel ordinance; that it is the door of admission into the visible church, and ought always to precede the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and that it should be administered to the same subject but once.

This common ground implies its impor-

iance to both parties. Though it is an external rite, and not absolutely necessary to salvation, yet being an institution of the gospel, and the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom, it is of great importance that we should observe it agreeably to its original design and intent.

It is a positive law, and hence should be observed according to its letter. There is no mending, altering, or changing the laws and institutions of Christ allowed to any of his followers, however devout and holy they may be. He is our Lord, as well as Saviour, and we must hear and obey him.

This discourse will contain a brief narration of the different steps which I took in the investigation of this subject, and the conclusions to which I arrived.

To begin. The first book which I opened was the New Testament. In this book, the word baptize often occurs,—a Greek word with an English termination. To understand its meaning seemed to be the first step for me to take. I therefore had recourse to the Greek Testament which contains the original language in which it was written. Here I found the word baptizo with its noun baptisma, and participle

baptizantes ; the verb, called by our translators "baptize," the noun "baptism," and the participle "baptizing."

As words are the signs of our ideas, the great point with me was, to obtain the true translation of the word "baptizo ;" in order to which, I examined every passage in the New Testament where the word is used, and found in every place where baptism was spoken of, this was the word used by the inspired penman.

My next business was to obtain the meaning of the word baptizo, as translated by Greek lexicographers. I obtained the testimony of no less than twenty-three, all of whom agree that its primary meaning is "to immerse, plunge, dip, overwhelm,"—and a few of them give as a remote meaning, "to wash, lave, or tinge ;" this, however, as a consequence, or by implication, because a thing washed, whatever may be its process, must be as wet as if immersed. Hence, Alstedius says, "it means not to wash, except by consequence."

So overwhelming is this testimony, that many learned Pedeo-baptists, I found, were constrained to admit it—among whom is Professor Stuart of Andover. He says that "the words bapto and baptizo mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any thing

liquid," and that "all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this." Accordingly, I sought out the opinions of a number of distinguished divines, who were acquainted with the best Greek authorities, including classic literature, and to my surprise, I found an host of witnesses who were Pedo-baptists, and yet, in spite of their creed, conceded the point.

Your attention is invited to the testimonies of a few of these witnesses.

Campbell says, "The word *baptism*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse. Had baptizo been employed in the sense of *raino*, to sprinkle, (which, as far as I know, it never is, in any use, sacred or classical,) the expression would doubtless have been, 'I indeed baptize water upon you.'"

Beza. "Neither does the word baptizo signify to wash, unless consequently, for it properly signifies to plunge into, for the sake of tinging or dying."

John Calvin says, "The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

Luther. "The term baptizo is Greek, and may be rendered dipping, as when we dip any thing in water, so that it is

covered all over. And although the custom be now abolished among many, (for they do not dip their children, but only pour on them a little water,) yet they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately taken out; the etymology of the word seems to require it."

Melancthon. "Baptism is an entire action, to wit, a dipping and the pronouncing these words, I baptize thee, &c."

I could quote more than a dozen additional, whose testimonies are equally explicit, but for the want of time, I will close this paragraph by giving you *Dr. Whitby's*. He says, "Baptism by immersion, is suitable both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life."

The next thing that attracted my attention was, *the practice of the Greek church*. This church is of ancient date, and comprises at this day a large portion of the Christian world; portions of which are in the coldest latitudes in the Russian Empire. And yet immersion is their only mode, and has always been so from the beginning. Now, it will be recollected that the Greek

is their mother language, and it is to be supposed that they understand the popular meaning of the word baptizo, and that their practical application of that term to immersion, is an imperishable monument to its truth.

In view of these facts I inquired, Whence came the practice of sprinkling? The Greek lexicographers answer, "Not from us." The Oriental church answers, "Not from us." The Roman Catholic church answers not from the primary meaning of the word, nor from the primitive practice, which was immersion; but by authority committed to her *she changed it*. I could but wonder at the inconsistency of the Reformed churches, and their learned men, who, with the writings of the Reformers in their hands, declare, in the language of Calvin, that "the word baptize means to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church," and yet plead for the change on the ground of expediency and convenience.

My only alternative, therefore, was either to admit the infallibility of the Papal church, and her right to change or alter the ordinances of the gospel, or that immersion was the primitive and only scrip-

tural baptism. Of course, I must choose the latter.

By this time I consider the word fairly translated. With this translation I began to read the Scriptures. "In those days came John the Immerser—and were all immersed of him in the river Jordan. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be immersed of him. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and immersed. Jesus made and immersed more disciples than John, though Jesus himself immersed not, but his disciples. He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved. Go ye,—teach all nations, immersing them. Then Peter said, repent and be immersed every one of you. Then they that gladly received the word were immersed." And so on.

I was led to ask myself, What, if this word had been properly rendered by the translators of our English version of the bible, would have become of sprinkling? —who of us would have practised it? As it is, nearly half of the Christian world are Baptists.

My next inquiry was, Do the scripture examples set forth immersion as essential to the ordinance? Have we any unequal

vocal examples of immersion, and have we any equally so of sprinkling, either direct or indirect—positive or inferential?

I found several undoubted examples of immersion recorded in the New Testament. First, John the Baptist baptized by immersion. Matt. 3: 12. Luke 3: 3. Acts 19: 4. Mark 1: 5. John 3: 23, and Luke 7: 29, 30. In these passages we are taught, 1. That John prepared the people for baptism by preaching. 2. That he required repentance and faith as the pre-requisites for receiving the ordinance. 3. For the want of this the Lawyers and Pharisees were not baptized. 4. That this baptism was immersion. This is the common sense view of the subject. They were baptized *in* the river Jordan. The reason assigned for his baptizing at Aenon near to Salim was, because there was much water there; hence they came and were baptized. And finally, the original has but one name for the ordinance, and that is, as we have seen, immersion. “They came and were immersed.”

Christ's baptism furnishes the second example of immersion. Mark 1: 9. Matt. 3: 16. Mark 1: 10. Jesus was baptized, not *with* the river Jordan, but *in* it;

and hence when he was baptized, went straightway out of the water.

Had the baptism of John and of Christ any thing to do with Christian baptism? was the next question which I was led to examine.

John's baptism was either under the law or the gospel dispensation. If under the former, we should expect that the law required it. But where can such a requirement be found in the law? The baptism of John was not from the law, but more recently from heaven. Matt. 21 : 25. Luke 16 : 16, informs us that "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it." By "the kingdom of God," we understand the Gospel dispensation, which, from the days of John the Baptist, was preached. This is evident from Matt. 11 : 12, 13, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and all the law prophesied until John." The kingdom of heaven began just where the law and the prophets ended. The law and the prophets were until John, when the new dispensation opened, and the kingdom of

God was preached. Hence Mark 1: 1. John's ministry is called "The beginning of the gospel of the Son of God." Mr. Benson remarks in his commentary on this text, "The gospel of Jesus Christ began, according to the prediction of the prophets, with the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist." Hence Zecharias his father declared at his birth, by the inspiration of God, that "The day spring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness," &c., Luke 1: 78, 79. "That is," says Mr. Benson, "the Gospel dispensation is as superior to the Patriarchal, or Mosaic, with their types and shadows, as the light of the rising sun is superior to the moon and stars. This gospel day dawned in the ministry of John the Baptist, and it increased more and more during the personal ministry of Christ, and it shone out with meridian splendor on the day of Pentecost." This view explains Matt. 11: 11. The phrase, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he," does not mean that he was not in that kingdom at all; but that he was only acquainted with its rudiments, while the future subjects of Christ's kingdom were destined to enjoy its privileges in its matured state.

Having therefore satisfied my mind that John's ministry was not under the law but under the gospel, I was about to conclude that his baptism was a gospel ordinance, when the thought occurred to me that some of his disciples had been rebaptized. This led me to examine the passage in Acts 19 : 1—6. These persons were undoubtedly rebaptized. But why? Was it because of any imperfection in John's baptism? I think not. But the whole passage implies that they had been baptized irregularly. For, 1. It does not appear that John himself ever baptized them. The text does not say that he did, for had he, we have reason to believe that he would have given them instruction upon those points on which they were profoundly ignorant. So ignorant were they that they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

Now, could they have attended upon the ministry of John and been so ignorant? Review John's discourses, and you will see that would be impossible. To use the words of Prof. Ripley—"Their baptism, then, was an altogether ignorant and irregular transaction; it was in truth a nullity. And on this ground, doubtless

the apostles required them, having since become Christians, and having now been properly instructed, to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

The baptism of John, when regularly administered, was evidently considered by the first Christian church essentially the same with Christian baptism. Hence we do not find that any apostle, or other disciple of Jesus, was the second time baptized; not even Apollos, mentioned in Acts 18: 25, because he had before believed in Jesus Christ, although he had received only the baptism of John.

This objection being obviated, my conclusion was, that John's baptism was a gospel ordinance. This conclusion was, if possible, still more strongly confirmed in my mind by a reference to the fact that John and Christ were baptizing at the same time; and the strong intimation that John even baptized some of Christ's disciples. John 3: 22—24, we read—"After these things came Jesus and his disciples in the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized for John was not yet cast into prison."

And they came and were baptized. Who? The word "disciples" seems to be the antecedent to the pronoun "they." If so, is it not presumptive that "they"—the disciples of Christ—"came, and were baptized" by John? This appears to me more than probable.

Christ's baptism was the next subject into which I looked. I had always thought that the baptism of Jesus had nothing to do with the Christian ordinance, supposing that he was baptized as a priest. But here I found myself in error. Christ was not baptized as a Jewish Priest, for he did not belong to the Jewish priesthood. In Heb. 7 : 14, St. Paul says, "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Of course no statute of the Mosaic law touched the priesthood of Christ, who, verse 13, the apostle says, "pertained to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar."

Christ's baptism, therefore, was not a Jewish ordinance. What was it, then? In Matt. 3 : 13, and in John 1 : 32, 33, we have the answer—"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The term

‘righteousness’ denotes *practical obedience*. See Luke 1 : 6.

Mark the phrase, “*thus it becometh us.*” That is, both myself and yourself; for when Christ speaks of himself alone, he always uses the singular number. Here was a duty for both John and Christ to perform. Why? It was an appointment of the Father that Christ should be made manifest to Israel at the time of his baptism. This fact was revealed to John by Him who had sent him to baptize. Though John knew him not, yet he knew that the *circumstances* were appointed by which he should be made known both to himself and Israel as the Messiah. John 1 : 31, 33. John says, “I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

By this account we perceive that the design of Christ’s baptism was to ratify the ordinance; honoring it with his first manifestation to Israel, and thus giving it the sanction of his own example. In this manifestation of Christ to Israel, three things were evidently taught. 1. That he should baptize with the Holy Ghost.

2. That he was God's anointed ; and 3. That God approved of this act performed by him as the great Prophet, to teach both by precept and example.

From the whole, my conclusions were that Christ was baptized under the gospel dispensation ; not as a Jewish priest ; not unto repentance,—for he had no sin to repent of,—but as our great Teacher and Exemplar of *practical obedience* ; ratifying the ordinance, by sealing it with his own example, that all his church should follow his steps. I can see it in no other light.

My next inquiry was, What was the practice of the Apostles ? Did they follow the example of Christ and go down into the water, and come up straightway out of the water, or did they sprinkle ?

The first prominent example of immersion is recorded in Acts 8 : 35—the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The following circumstances mark this as an undoubted case of immersion. 1. The Eunuch said, Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized ? 2. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch. 3. When in the water Philip baptized him. 4. After his baptism “ they came up out of the water.”

Dr. Doddridge remarks, “ It would be

very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the water merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch. A person of his dignity had no doubt many vessels in his baggage, (by which water might be brought into the chariot,) on such a journey, through a desert country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them."

My next business was to look at those passages which were less minute in detail, and see if by fair construction any of them favored a different mode. I turned to Acts 2d and read, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Two objections have been urged against the idea of the immersion of these persons. 1. The want of time in which to immerse such a multitude. 2. The want of conveniences in which to perform that rite.

With regard to the first objection, it has not been fully demonstrated that twelve men could not have performed that service "the same day." But if it were demonstrated, it is not certain that these twelve men had to perform all this service, for there were seventy others who had equal

authority to baptize. Add this number to the twelve, and the difficulty vanishes at once.* With regard to the second objection, there were ample conveniences in the Temple, and it does not appear that the disciples had yet been excluded from the privilege of the temple. Luke 24 : 53. Besides, Jerusalem abounded in cisterns, reservoirs, fountains and pools. So abundant were they, that Dr. Robinson devotes nineteen pages, in his work on Palestine, to the supply of water in Jerusalem.[†] He says, "In the numerous sieges to which Jerusalem in all ages has been

* Some suppose that there were one hundred and twenty administrators; if so, says Rev. L. Porter, "There would have been twenty-five candidates to each, who might easily be immersed in thirty minutes. "To twelve administrators," continues Mr. P., "there would have been two hundred and fifty candidates each, who could readily have been immersed in five hours, with time for resting. Although the administrators were sufficiently numerous and the water sufficiently abundant for the baptism of 3 000 in one day, we are not informed that 3,000 were baptized in one day. In one day 3,000 were added to the church.—See Rev. L. Porter's Notes, p. 121.

† In Jerusalem, baths for immersion were so numerous that the digging of cisterns, for such uses, was a trade. In the Temple there were ten brass lavers, each of which held over nine barrels of water, and the great brazen sea that contained over 500 barrels of water. There were also the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, and the brooks of Cedron and Sorek. These places were all free —Rev. L. Porter's Notes

exposed, we nowhere read of a want of water within the city."

In the absence, therefore, of all evidence of sprinkling, with the examples of immersion already quoted, together with the true meaning of the word baptize, my conclusions were that they were immersed. They were also the same with regard to the baptism of Paul. Acts 9 : 17. Cornelius and his friends. Acts 10 : 42. Lydia and her household. Acts 16 : 13. So Paul baptizing at Corinth. Acts 18 : 4.

The case of the Jailor, in Acts 16 : 27, is more circumstantial, and I determined to mark all the circumstances, and see on which side of the question they seemed most favorable.

1. The Jailor brought out Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What did he bring them out of? Answer. The prison. Where did he bring them to? Answer. Into his house. For it is added, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

2. When they were baptized they went out of his house, where he washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his

3. It appears that after this he "brought them into his house."

Now, on the supposition that the Jailor and his household were sprinkled, I could but admit that it would have been much more convenient, at the midnight hour, for them to have remained in his house, than to have gone out. Most certainly the brief circumstances here noted are altogether on the side of immersion.

The next topics of examination were those figurative and metaphorical passages which speak of baptism.

In this examination my chief inquiry was, which do they best represent, sprinkling or immersion? I turned to Luke 12 : 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." "That is," says Prof. Stuart, "I am about to be overwhelmed with sufferings, and I am greatly distressed with the prospect of them."

Again, Mark 10 : 38, 39. Can "ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" That is, says Prof. Stuart, "Sufferings of an overwhelming nature."

Again, 1 Cor. 15 : 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?" Says the same author, "of what

avail is it to endure overwhelming sorrows, if there be no resurrection of the dead?"

The baptism of the hosts of Israel unto Moses, and in the cloud, 1 Cor. 10 : 1. Also, Noah and his family saved by water, "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." 1 Pet. 3 : 20. "The being baptized into one body," Gal. 3 : 27. "Baptized into Christ," are all figurative passages drawn from, or intended to represent baptism. I cannot see that these figures could any more justify the idea of sprinkling, than a few drops of water could surround and cover hundreds of thousands at one time ; or float the ark ; or that a person could sink down into a few drops of water.

I concluded this paragraph by an examination of Rom. 6 : 3, and Col. 2 : 12. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are

risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

I consider that a careful examination of this passage establishes the following. 1. That baptism is here used as a metaphor, by which to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. 2. Of the Christian's death to sin, and resurrection to spiritual life. Observe the two phrases. Buried with him *by* baptism, and buried with him *in* baptism. The one referring to the act of baptism, and the other to the state of the baptized. It is plain that sprinkling cannot answer this figure, and nothing short of, nothing but immersion is intended by it.

My last inquiry was as to the practice of the primitive church, with regard to immersion. This inquiry is to be answered only by a reference to the testimony of historians. It so happens that we have them in great abundance.

Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers says, "we die symbolically in baptism." Upon these words *Rigaltius* remarks, "we are immersed as if we suffered death, and rise up out of the water, as reviving again."

Chrysostom says, "to be dipped and plunged into water, and then to rise up

out of it again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and of our ascent out of it. And therefore Paul calls baptism a burial, when he says, "we are therefore buried with him by baptism into death."

So *Barnabas* says, "we go down into the water full of sins and pollution, but come up again bringing forth fruit in our hearts."

Tertullian, in his treatise on Baptism, says, "it is all one whether we are washed in the sea, or in a pond; in a fountain, or in a river; in a standing, or in a running water; nor is there any difference between those that John baptized in Jordan, and those that Peter baptized in the Tiber."

Justin Martyr, in his apology before the Roman Emperor, says of those who dedicate themselves to God through Christ, upon their conversion, "they are brought to a place of water and washed in the name of God the Father. Moreover the person baptized and illuminated, is baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the name of the Holy Ghost."

Basil, archbishop of Cæsarea, puts the following questions in his Lent sermons to the catechumens before their baptism. "How can we be placed in a condition of likeness to his death? Answer. By being

buried with him in baptism. How are we to go down with him into the grave? By imitating the burial of Christ in baptism; for the bodies of the baptized are in a sense buried in water. By three immersions we administer this important ceremony of baptism, that death may be represented in a figure."

Grotius, in his Annotation on Matt. 3 : 6, says, "That this rite was performed by immersion, and not by affusion, appears both by the propriety of the word, and the places chosen for its administration."

Du Pin says, "In the three first centuries, they plunged those three times in the water, whom they baptized."

Gregory, in his Ecclesiastical History, informs us, that "baptism, in the primitive times, was administered by immersion."

Mosheim, speaking of the second century says, "Those adult persons that desired to be baptized, received the sacrament of baptism according to the ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that institution, even by immersion."

Eusebius, in his life of Constantine the Great, records the following speech of the dying Emperor. "This is the hour, (that is, the hour of his baptism,) wherein we may also enjoy that seal which confers

immortality. I had heretofore taken a resolution of doing this in the river Jordan, where our Saviour himself, in likeness to us, is recorded to have partaken of the laver." Sickness prevented this design, and the Emperor was baptized in the usual way, by Eusebius, in the suburbs of Nicomedia."

The truth is, pouring made its first appearance in the third century. In cases of sickness that would not allow of immersion, pouring was then allowed, because baptism began to be considered essential to salvation.

Sprinkling was held in the eighth century in cases of necessity to be valid by a decision of Pope Stephen III., but it was not until the year 1311 that dipping or sprinkling were declared to be indifferent, which was done by the Legislature, in a council at Ravenna.

I might go on to quote from historians, who all seem united in one common expression, viz., that sprinkling or pouring is of a much later date than immersion. The relics of baptisteries which are now standing, and known to have been of ancient date, are so many Monuments in favor of immersion.

Indeed, I know of no institution of God

that comes to us supported by a greater amount of evidence of its divine character, than that immersion is the only scriptural baptism.

Having fully settled the question in my mind, as to what constitutes baptism, I began to doubt whether I had been right in my views as to its proper subjects; for in the investigation of the mode, I necessarily glanced at the subjects of baptism. I had believed that there were three classes of subjects—penitents, believers, and infants.

The first I had founded on Acts 2: 38. “Repent and be baptized every one of you,” &c. This error, I perceived, arose from my viewing their repentance in a sense which did not include saving faith. The 41st verse corrected my mistake. “Then they that gladly received the word were baptized.” Their *gladly receiving the word*, implies faith.

This left me but two classes of subjects, believers and infants. As to the former, there is no controversy. The latter only, claimed my attention. The subject, therefore, was narrowed down to a single point, *Ought infants to be baptized?*

I judged as ministers of the gospel baptized in the name, so also must they bap-

tize by the authority of Jesus Christ, and that the gospel should contain their credentials.

I turned to my text which contains our commission. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. I reasoned—are not infants a part of all nations? Yes. Then ought we not to baptize them? But according to the order of the text, we ought to teach first, those whom we baptize. But infants cannot be taught; therefore they are not included in this commission. I then examined the parallel text, Mark 16: 15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," &c. I said to myself, infants are creatures; but did our Lord intend that the gospel should be preached to them? Certainly not: for he adds—"He that believeth and is baptized," &c. It follows therefore, as infants cannot believe, nor be taught, so the Master did not commission his servants to baptize them.

I understand the commission thus:—"Teach all the gospel who can be taught, and baptize all that truly believe—but infants cannot be taught, therefore you are not to baptize them."

Infant baptism then, is not in the commission given to the ministers of Christ

Of this I am certain. Nothing can be plainer. So I decided, and so I believe.

Still I reasoned that if it belonged to Christ's kingdom, its enactment must be somehow or somewhere recorded. I searched the New Testament for one precept, but could find none.

I then looked for inferential proof. I recollected that this was the kind of evidence by which we proved female communion; namely, women were baptized, and as such, they had a right to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I thought inference equally clear for infant baptism would satisfy me.

I turned to Mark 10 : 14 "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." I had no evidence that this passage had any allusion to baptism. The children were brought to Christ, not to be baptized, but to be blest; and when Christ had prayed for them and blessed them, they went away as they came, unbaptized. Mr. Scott says that the reason why they were not baptized was, because they had been circumcised. But had not all the male disciples of Christ been circumcised?

It is not contended that these children were baptized, or brought to Christ for

that purpose, but that the phrase, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," implies, that they were the proper subjects of baptism; that the kingdom of heaven means either the world of future glory, or the gospel church; that if they are the proper subjects of the former, they must be of the latter.

But query—Are infants the proper subjects of the kingdom of glory? If so, they are holy, and of course the doctrine of human depravity cannot be true. But we all believe that infants are unholy, and as such they are not fit for heaven, and can no more be admitted into that holy place than we, without a change of heart. Therefore infants, with the nature with which they were born into this world, are not the proper subjects of the heavenly world.*

Again. Are they the proper subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth? If so, are they not the subjects of the laws, and privileges of that kingdom?

What laws can infants be the subjects of, and what privileges can they enjoy?

* Still I believe that all who die in infancy are saved. But not because they are naturally holy. I trust that through the infinite benevolence of God, as they have never actually sinned, so the merits of Jesus will be unconditionally applied to regenerate and save them.

Answer. None. 'They may be baptized, and they may partake of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, which they ought to do if they are members of the church. Hence infant communion is almost, or quite, as old as infant baptism. But is all this obeying the laws and enjoying the privileges of the kingdom of Christ? I think not.

I see then no evidence that infants are the proper subjects of either the kingdom of grace, or glory. The word "*such*" in the text, I do not understand to express *identity*, but *comparison*. The context plainly shows it. "And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." No one supposes that Christ meant to teach that we must shrink into the size and age of little children by humbling ourselves as little children. Consequently, in that passage where Christ says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," he would teach us that

adults must receive the kingdom of God in that humble, meek, and depending temper, which will make them appear *like or as* little children. So we believe that Christ uses the word "*such*" as a term of comparison. Hence this passage does not appear to have any thing to do with baptism, either directly or indirectly.

The next passage to which I looked is found 1 Cor. 7 : 12—14. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

What holiness? It is either moral, ceremonial, or civil. It could not be moral holiness, for holiness is not hereditary. It could not be ceremonial holiness, for the ceremonial law was abolished. It follows, then, that it must be civil holiness,—these children being the pure and legitimate offspring of the holy institution of matrimony; and hence the true sense of the text evidently is—Else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate. I ask again, what has this to do with baptism?

I next inquired if it could not be inferred from what the scriptures say of the baptism of whole householders?

At Phillipi there were two households baptized—Lydia's, Acts 16 : 13, and the tailor's, verse 33. Lydia's household

comprised all who were first baptized within the boundaries of Europe, and the jailor's the second company of baptized individuals.

This company Paul and Silas left at the prison when they went back and entered the house of Lydia. Here "they saw and comforted the brethren." What brethren? Were they not those believing individuals whom they baptized in the family of Lydia?

Dr. Whitby on this passage, says:—
 "And when she and those of her household were instructed in the Christian faith, in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized, and her household."

The assembly of divines in their annotations and note on this text say, that "Paul and Silas entered into the house of Lydia doubtless to confirm them in the faith, which they had preached to them. Lydia and hers *hearing* of their miraculous deliverance, could not but be comforted and confirmed in the faith." These testimonies from Pede-baptists show that there is nothing to be drawn from this, in favor of infant baptism.

As to the jailor's **household**, I could find no infants there. **It is** said that the apostles spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. Mark

ye—they spake the word of the Lord “to *all* that were in his house.” Would they speak the word of the Lord to infants? Certainly not; but they spake the word to *all* that were in his house. It follows then that there were no infants in his house.

And hence verse 34th says, “that when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.” As Matthew Henry says, “the voice of rejoicing, with that of salvation, was heard in the jailor’s house. *He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* There were none in his house that refused to be baptized, and so make a jar in the ceremony; but they were unanimous in embracing the gospel, which added much to their joy.”

Acts 8: 4, 5—8, we are informed of the baptism of Crispus and his household. But it is said that he “believed on the Lord with all his house.” Hence they were all believers, and no infants.

The next is the household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. 1: 16. Of this household Paul says, ch. 16: 15, “Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia.” Fruits of what? The ministry of the word by which they believed, **who**

were rendered the proper subjects of baptism.

Of this household Paul further adds, "that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." To whom will this apply? Not to infants. We know that none but adults could administer to the wants of the poor persecuted followers of Jesus.

The household of Cornelius, Acts x. Here is the formation of the first Christian church among the Gentiles; and as such we should look to it as a model church. But what is the sum of the whole history bearing upon this question? It is simply this: 1. Peter preaches to them. 2. The Holy Ghost falls upon them. They receive it and believe; and 3. They are baptized.

Now if the infants of those who believed were also to be admitted into the pale of the visible church of Christ, the apostle omitted a very important item in giving to the Gentile world a model for a Gospel church. There were doubtless many families present to hear Peter, who were converted to God under his ministry, and yet after all there was not an infant baptized, nor a single hint given to that effect.

Surely Pedo-baptist missionaries in hea-

then lands do not follow Peter's example. From their journals we find that they as regularly baptize the children of their converts as they do the converts themselves. But why Peter neglected this branch of his duty I cannot conceive, unless he were a Baptist, and had no confidence in infant baptism. Confidence, did I say? I doubt whether he had ever heard of such a thing. Ay, more. I seriously doubt whether he had ever thought of such a thing. I am sure I never should if I had never heard any more about it than what is taught in the Bible.

Again, I looked for some intimations which might favor infant baptism in Acts 2. But I found that all who were baptized on the day of Pentecost were believers. 1. They were pricked to the heart, and said, &c. 2. They were required to repent, &c. 3. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." 4. "They continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

But did not the apostle hint at the baptism of infants, when he said, "the promise is to you and your children?" I think not; for to what "promise" does he refer? Answer The promise of the Holy Ghost,

which infant children are incapable of receiving. But a cursory view of his discourse makes this evident.

The Apostle's exhortation teaches that upon their repentance and baptism they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "For the promise," says he, "is unto you and your children—even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise, then, can only be claimed by such as repent and are baptized, having been called by the Gospel. The *children* mentioned are such as can repent, and hence the term does not mean infants; but *posterity*. The promise is recorded in Joel 2: 28. And the children are those mentioned in Acts 2: 17, 18. "Your sons and your daughters, young men, servants and hand maids."

One more case. We learn in the eighth chapter of Acts, that Philip, one of the first deacons of the church at Jerusalem, became the instrument of a revival of religion that moved the city of Samaria. So general was the work, that it is said that "the people with one accord gave heed unto the things that Philip spake," &c. And that "when they believed they were baptized, both men and women."

Strange, indeed, that Philip should have

neglected the children. If he did not, it is equally singular that Luke omitted the mention of it. He says he baptized both men and women. Why not children, also? Then it would have read, "Baptized men, women and children." I am satisfied why the word children was not added; and so I think every honest man must be who examines this subject, and draws his proofs from the holy scriptures.

I thus went through the New Testament scriptures, and asked, where is infant baptism to be found? And echo answered, Where? It was not there, neither in precept, example, intimation, nor inference, as I could see.

Pedo-baptists admit the silence of the New Testament upon infant baptism. But this silence, they say, is one of the strongest arguments in favor of its truth. They say that baptism is substituted in the place of circumcision, and that all believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. Now, as children were interested in that covenant under the law, so must they also be under the gospel, unless the gospel states to the contrary. The gospel being silent upon that subject, makes it sure that infant children are to receive the substitute of circumcision, namely, baptism. In this whole

statement I find the premises are assumed. They are not proved, neither can they be proved. What then becomes of the conclusions drawn from them? I was led to this decision by an examination, critically, for the first time in my life, of the Abrahamic covenant. It is recorded in Gen. 17. This covenant embraces, 1. God's promise to Abraham, that he should be the father to many nations—and of kings—that he would be his God, and the God of his posterity, to whom he promises to give the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.

2. This covenant was conditional;—which condition he and his posterity must comply with, in order to a fulfilment of the promise, “Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised.”

In order to ascertain whether we are under the Abrahamic covenant, and that baptism is the substitute for circumcision, I inquired:—1. What part of the law of circumcision as applicable to baptism is still in force? The rite itself is abolished. Here we all agree. But what in reference to the law of circumcision is binding?

Does it include for its substitute the same classes of subjects, viz.—Infant children, slaves and domestics, whether adults or infants, believers or unbelievers, and finally none but males? Does it require us to baptize our children precisely at eight days old, under the penalty of breaking the covenant? What is the practice of the whole Pedit-baptist world? Do they not baptize their infants at any age, and of both sexes—adult slaves and domestics not at all, except by their own request as believers? Why depart from this law? Is not the gospel silent upon this subject, and does not this silence imply, according to their own argument, that it is still binding?

2. What was the design of circumcision? I instituted this inquiry to ascertain if baptism answers the same design. For surely it ought, if believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. 1. The first design of it was to form a national church, the nucleus of which was in the family of Abraham. It was a rite by which persons became entitled to all its blessings and privileges, which, as promised in Genesis, 17th chapter, were principally of a temporal nature. I need only to ask, is this the design of baptism? We know it is not. 2. Circumcision was designed to prefigure the

necessity of regeneration. Rom. 2 : 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly ; * * and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Gal. 4 : 15. Col. 2 : 11.

This rite, then, when applied to infants, was designed to show the *want* of a new heart, and not the actual possession of it. But baptism does not teach the *necessity* of the new birth ; it is the "outward and visible sign of the inward, and spiritual grace" already received, and must be inapplicable to all infants, unless we regard it as regeneration, as some Pedo-baptists do, in which they are consistent, though the doctrine itself is absurd.

3. The sign of circumcision was designed to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4 : 3. It was a seal to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was intended to perpetuate this glorious doctrine,—that there was a substitute for the law of works or perfect obedience as a condition of the sinner's justification. It was the seal of this blessed truth. It preached it until the gospel day, every time this rite was administered. It was not the condition of justification, for Abraham was justified when in uncircumcision. It was not

the badge of its profession ; but it was a seal to its truth and perpetuation.

Is baptism the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith ? Answer. It is not. Christ has sealed the doctrine in his own person and ministry. Circumcision sealed it until Christ came. To circumcise after Christ's ministry had been enjoyed, was a tacit denial of Christ. It was a refusal to admit the truth of Christ's ministry, and a going back to the law, and bearing its heavy yoke, from which Christ makes his people free. Hence Paul says, Gal. 5 : 2, 3, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Such have nothing to do with the gospel. He has more confidence in this bloody rite than he has in the words of Jesus Christ. If baptism be the substitute of circumcision, then it must be the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith. But why have this seal when we have the thing for which it was instituted ? Has not Christ sealed this truth in his life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and his preached gospel ? Is baptism more significant than all this ? I challenge the Christian world to find a single passage that intimates that

baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith. Where, then, is the evidence that baptism is substituted for circumcision?

But it is said that we are still under the Abrahamic covenant. We will suppose for a moment that we are. If so, those children who were circumcised previous to the institution of the ordinance of baptism needed not to be baptized in order to become members of the gospel church, because they had fulfilled the condition of that covenant in their circumcision; and as baptism is designed for the same purpose, its administration to all such would not only be unnecessary but improper. It would be the same as baptizing a person twice, each of which being according to the divine institution.

Yet all John's subjects had been circumcised. All Christ's disciples had been circumcised. All the males of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost had also received that rite, and Paul, speaking of himself, says that he was circumcised the eighth day—and yet when he believed he was baptised. What, I could but ask myself, were all these persons baptized for, if they had already fulfilled the condition of the Abrahamic covenant? The truth is. I have concluded that believers under the

gospel are not under this covenant, but as St. Paul says, Heb. 8 : 6, "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

I see then nothing in the promise of the Abrahamic covenant—nothing in the law of circumcision—nor in the design of the institution, that intimates that baptism is to be its substitute, and withal I am well satisfied that believers are not under the covenant of circumcision.

If we were disposed to turn the tables, we think it would not be a difficult task to show, that the design of baptism is totally dissimilar from that of circumcision. But for want of time we will not pursue this idea.

Of one thing, however, I feel well assured, and that is, that these two institutions are as dissimilar one to the other in their design, as they are in their forms.

I think it can be satisfactorily shown from the New Testament, that baptism never was designed to be a substitute for circumcision.*

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, by the unanimous voice of a council, comprising most if not all of the

* See page 53.

apostles and elders of the whole Christian church, and by the approbation of the Holy Ghost, *we see circumcision put down and no substitute proposed in its room.* In this whole account there is not the most distant hint that baptism was to be the practice in the room of circumcision.

In the twenty-first chapter of Acts, there is a case still plainer than the one recorded in the fifteenth chapter. When Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem, we are informed that the day after his arrival he went in unto James, and all the elders were present. Before these he rehearsed what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified the Lord. But one of them remarked, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of thee. that thou teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children."

Here is a case directly in point. Paul is charged with teaching his Jewish converts to neglect the circumcising their children; but in case he taught them to baptize in its room, was he not called upon

in the most imperious manner in self-defence to have declared it? But did he? No. His total silence on that occasion comes to my mind with all the weight of positive evidence, that no such practice was then in existence.

Where, then, is the evidence for infant baptism? It is not in the New Testament. It is not in the Old Testament.—Nor is it in the Old and New Testaments if taken both together. Where, then, is the proof? The Roman Catholic church may answer, but revelation is silent.

I am quite sure it is not an institution of Christ, that it was not practised by his apostles, nor during the apostolic age;—that it is an institution of man, originating in false views of the design of baptism itself, and was not known in the Christian church until the latter part of the second century, or the beginning of the third. I fully believe with Martin Luther, as to infant baptism it cannot be proved by the sacred scriptures that it was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.” I know it has been said, that Irenæus states that “the church received a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism to little children, or infants.” This would be coming pretty

near to it. For Irenæus was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a disciple of John the Evangelist; but Dr. Gill has spoiled this argument by challenging the whole literary world to produce such a passage from the writings of Irenæus. It was afterwards acknowledged that Origen, of the third century, and not Irenæus of the second, was the writer intended.

Tertullian, of Africa, in the latter part of the second, or beginning of the third century, is supposed to be the first writer who makes any mention of infant baptism. He wrote a book against the indiscriminate baptism of minors. He contends that it is most expedient to be regulated by the disposition and age of the person to be baptized. He says, "Let them come while they are growing up, let them come and learn, and let them be instructed when they come, and when they *understand* Christianity, let them profess themselves Christians."

About the middle of the third century, or about fifty years after Tertullian, the people in Africa had got baptism down to new-born babes.

Fidus, a country bishop, wrote to Cyprian of Carthage, to know whether children might be baptized before they were

eight days old, for by his bible he could not tell. This question could not be decided by Cyprian without consulting a council of bishops. This council consisted of between sixty and seventy bishops, who finally decided, that as baptism was so necessary to save men, infants ought to enjoy the benefits of it as soon as they were born.

Here lies the secret of the origin of infant baptism. If men had not blended it with regeneration and made it regeneration itself, it had never been known. No argument was then sought from the example or precept of Christ, or his apostles. It was wholly a matter of expediency, and was introduced and prevailed for the sake of the salvation of precious, immortal souls ! Dr. Gill says, "No instance can be given of infant baptism, so early as of infant communion."

If it be asked, how could infant baptism ever have been begun in the church ? the answer is, just as the worship of angels and saints, and praying to them, celibacy of the clergy, the observation of Lent and other popish festivals, the worship of relics, the doctrine of purgatory and of transubstantiation, and the order of monks, were begun. For all these took their rise in the

church about the same time with infant baptism and infant communion.

For the reasons above assigned, I can but reject infant baptism as absurd and ridiculous. It is also evil in its tendency. It prevents us from owning Christ in the way of his appointment. It is that by which Antichrist has extended his dominions over many nations. It is the foundation of national churches ; and its influence is to lessen the authority of the word of God, which it makes void by human tradition.

Thus, my hearers, you have my reasons for changing my denominational relation and you have heard the substance of the arguments which have made me a Baptist. I was sprinkled soon after I found the Lord, and I verily thought myself baptized. But I am now quite sure that in this I have erred. And as baptism is to answer a good conscience, for conscience' sake I have been obliged to make this concession, and follow my Saviour. And I rejoiced when the hour came. I hailed it not as a cross. I complied with Christ's command, not as a task, but as one of the happiest and most privileged acts of my life.

In conclusion I would remark, that I have heard much said about my being

precipitate in deciding these great questions. But I can assure the public that I have not been hasty in my conclusions.— And I think that those who have heard me on this occasion, will at least admit that my decision on these points was never made without much study and careful research to find out the truth. I can assure you, and all whom it may concern, that I never announced myself a Baptist, until I fully and unequivocally believed their doctrine—that I never gave up the subject until, to my mind, infant baptism and sprinkling were annihilated, and nothing left as scriptural baptism but the immersion of believers.

It has been inquired, “Why did you not go to the most intelligent of your ministerial brethren and frankly state to them your doubt?” To this I reply, Why should I? Did I not understand all that could be said by Pede-baptists? That ground was familiar to me, and I was certain that they could add nothing new.— They might have given me advice, but surely they could not have given me arguments which I had not seen. I wanted arguments to counteract the Baptist argument, and not merely friendly advice.

Finally, I would say to all such as are

inclined to censure me for dissolving my connexion with the church of my early choice—a church of which I have been a member ever since I was seventeen years old, and in which I have been an ordained minister for nearly twenty years—I would just say : You may think me unwise, premature, or even acting under an infatuation, and in this you may be honest. I also claim to be equally so, in believing it to be my imperative duty to come out as I have done in defence of what I regard as the truth. Should even my motives be impugned, still an approving conscience will sustain me, and in the exercise of Christian love I hope to pray, “ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

But to all such as honestly inquire, Why have you done this? I would say, consider well the statements to which you have attentively listened. And above all, take the holy scriptures, and “ search and see ” for yourselves.

And may God grant his Holy Spirit, by which we may understand His word, and be made wise unto salvation thereby, through faith in Jesus Christ. **AMEN.**

NOTE. In the 16th chapter of Acts we have an account of Paul's circumcising Timothy, upon whom this rite had never been before performed. For though his mother was a Jewess, yet his father was a Greek. But he had been baptized, because, in verse 1, he is called a disciple, and doubtless belonged to the Christian church. For he was "well reported by the brethren," &c. ; upon which the apostle not only received him as a brother, but as a son in the gospel, and a fellow laborer in the ministry. Here, then, is a clear case of circumcision after baptism. How, then, could baptism be its substitute? The substitute must follow—not precede. Besides, if the rite of circumcision and the ordinance of Christian baptism be the same, then Paul, by circumcising Timothy, sanctioned the doctrine of baptizing the same person twice.

At a meeting of the Official Board belonging to St. Paul's Station, held on Friday evening, the 6th inst., it was suggested that I should prepare an address to my congregation, informing them of my change of Theological views; to meet which, the following was prepared and read to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, at their own request, on the next evening. Objections were strongly urged against its being read to the people, on the ground of its dangerous tendency. Though it was admitted that it did not contain the argument, yet to their mind there appeared a certain something about it which they feared might to many be more conclusive than the scriptural argument itself. These explanations are made, and the "farewell letter" is published, with a view of answering a question, which has been so often asked, namely,—“Why was it, Br. Remington, that you left us so suddenly as not ever to bid us *farewell*?”

FAREWELL LETTER TO MY LATE CHARGE.

MY DEAR CONGREGATION—

Many of you have by this time probably heard that your Pastor has of late changed his theological views on some points, by which it is rendered necessary for him to resign his charge of this church and congregation, and to connect himself with another church, whose faith upon these points is in accordance with his own.

It is due to himself, and to the people to whom he has officiated, that some explanations should be made by which the cause of this change may be definitely known. And believing that none can be better qualified to discharge this duty than himself, the Official Board has not only given him liberty so to do, but have expressed a desire to have him do it; for which he feels very grateful to them, and equally free to discharge the duty, as he is grateful for the privilege.

For persons to leave one church and unite with another, is an occurrence which often takes place both in the ministry and membership. But such an occurrence never ought to take place without being well considered. It is a serious matter, and ought not to be entered upon without a clear conviction of

duty Principle, not passion, should guide us in such an affair. So distinctly should we see every step of the ground over which we pass in going from one denomination to another, that our way should be perfectly clear to ourselves, and there should not be a lingering doubt as to the expediency and propriety of our course.

When a private member of a Christian church changes his denominational relation, he should be so enlightened himself as to the path of duty, as to be prepared on all proper occasions to give his reasons for so doing.

It this may be said of the private member of a church, how much more so of a minister who has the pastoral oversight of a church and congregation. It is a duty he owes to the people—to the cause of Christ, for which he is supposed to act, and to himself, that the ministry be not blamed.

What I am now doing is not the practical result of mere impulse; but I trust that I am guided by motives to glorify God, and advance the interests of His cause. I cannot but believe that the hand of God is in it, for he hath led me in a path that I knew not.

A few months ago, I should as soon have expected to have been a Roman Catholic as a Baptist. Not that my opinion of the latter people was the same as of the former. For I always believed them to be a good, spiritual people, though I thought bigoted, and exceedingly narrow in their Christian charity. This I supposed grew not exactly out of their hearts, but

out of their creed, or out of their peculiar notions of the ordinance of baptism.

I acknowledge that I was strongly prejudiced against them; and so far did my prejudice extend itself, that I was almost ready to question their sincerity, and to look upon their rigid adherence to this point rather as a pretext by which to proselyte from other churches.

As to my own views of baptism, I scarcely believed at all in immersion. Indeed, my faith was so weak as to this mode, that I determined never, when I could possibly avoid it, to be its administrator.—Secretly did I almost hope that such persons would go to the Baptists, where I thought they more properly belonged.

Still, occasionally I had to administer the ordinance, either in person or by proxy. For I generally found such persons incurable. If I talked them out of it, in a short time their convictions would return again; and then our hands were tied, and they must either leave our church and go to the Baptists, or remain dissatisfied, which generally injured their spiritual enjoyments. One class, however, I never would baptize. I mean those who were Baptists,—that is, believe that immersion was the only mode, or the only true baptism. Such I either convinced to the contrary, or advised to join the Baptists. My reasons for this course must be obvious. We, as Methodists, believe baptism to be the door of admission into the visible church, and that no person has a

right to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized, it being a privilege belonging exclusively to members of the visible church. Hence I always thought the Baptists consistent in what is called close communion. They believe that baptized Christians have a right to the communion, and none but such; and so also do the Methodist Episcopal Church believe. The only difference is, that the latter recognizes sprinkling equally valid as baptism with immersion, while the former contends that immersion is the only baptism, or in other words, that sprinkling or pouring is no baptism.

It happened, a little more than two months ago, that several persons belonging to my congregation desired to be immersed. I could not refuse them, though I resolved not to immerse them myself.—Accordingly I engaged a brother in the ministry to officiate for me. To confess the whole truth, I felt rather vexed than pleased. The weather was cold, and I thought it presumptuous to go into the river under such circumstances. There were eight candidates, all females; one of whom was very feeble in health, and I was requested to reserve her for the last, which request I readily complied with.

Suffice it to say, they went down into the water one by one, and came straightway up out of the water, while I stood upon the shore a silent spectator. Soon, however, the scene began to melt my heart, and something seemed to kindly whisper, *this*

is the way to follow Jesus. I felt that Jesus was present to own and sanction his ordinance. That Spirit that descended upon him at his baptism in the river Jordan, appeared to be hovering over us, and to change the whole aspect of the occasion in my mind to one of the most intense interest and delight. At length the last subject came ; that feeble young woman went down into the water, and to my surprise she came up out of the water praising God.— And every step to the shore she repeated her praises, declaring that the water was not cold, though the ice was swimming all around her. So warm was her heart with the love of God, that she was unconscious of the cold. My heart was humbled, and I felt to mingle my tears of gratitude with hers. The impressions made upon my heart that morning, I trust will continue while memory endures.

I went home and confessed to my family that I had spoken unadvisedly about the solemn and interesting ordinance of immersion, and in my heart resolved never to do so again. Moreover I determined to examine more fully than ever I had done, the claims of the Baptists, thinking that by so doing my prejudices might become permanently softened, and my feelings more charitable towards them. Little did I think that such a result would follow as the sequel will show.

In the prosecution of this work, my Bible was my text-book, my only authority. I read the arguments of the Baptists.— the arguments of Pseudo-baptists I

already understood. I therefore endeavored to weigh each on both sides, in the balances of divine truth. I think I was honest, and I am sure I earnestly prayed to be guided into the truth. I had not pursued the examination very far before I became convinced, and as I advanced, those convictions increased, till at last, I was fully converted to the views which are entertained by the Baptist church on these points, by which they are distinguished as such. Or, in other words, I found myself in doctrine, a Baptist. I went over the ground again, and again, and came every time precisely to the same conclusions: viz. That there was no divine warrant for infant baptism in the word of God, and no evidence of its being an institution of the gospel—that believers alone, are the proper subjects of that holy ordinance.

I also came to the conclusion, that sprinkling or pouring is an unscriptural mode of administering baptism, for which we have neither precept, nor example, nor the most remote inference in the New Testament. And that immersion being sanctioned by precept and example, is baptism. In short, that there is no baptism without it. Of course my opinion must be, that those who are sprinkled are not baptized—and as unbaptized persons have no right to the communion, none but such as are immersed ought to commune together.

With these views, my congregation will plainly see that I could not remain in the Methodist church, and be an honest man. I could not baptize infants.

or sprinkle in the name of the Lord, and by his authority, when I felt perfectly satisfied that He never gave authority to do it. Nor could I virtually allow the validity of sprinkling or infant baptism, by an admission of such to the table of the Lord.

As, therefore, I must give an account of myself to God, so must I act for myself. Honor, duty, consistency, religion, require me to resign my pastoral charge over this church and congregation. I have served you as long as I could discharge, with fidelity, the duties imposed upon me by the Methodist Episcopal Church. I leave you with no unkind feelings. No. The members of this church and congregation have always treated me in the most gentlemanly and Christian-like manner. For all your kind attentions to me and mine, during my ministration among you, you have my sincere and hearty thanks. I shall always feel an interest for you, and not cease to pray that God may be with you, and bless you.

You all know that I have not sought to proselyte any to my new views. I have cautiously concealed all my thoughts from you with regard to this subject. I do not wish to divide or injure the church for whose spiritual welfare I have labored as their pastor. I love them no less now than ever. My advice to you is—"Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you and bless you." Commit your cause into His hands.—"Give to the winds your fears," while you put your trust in God. And I trust that God will send you a faithful pastor, who will edify and build you

up. I am soon to take up my lot and inheritance with another tribe of our common Israel, and the recollection that we belong to the same common family, will always afford me no small degree of pleasure. And finally, the hope of meeting in that bright world of light and glory, where we shall see truth without error, and forever bask in its sunshine, is most cheering and delightful in the prospect.— There I hope to meet you and the many thousands of the tribe of our Israel with whom I have been associated for more than twenty of the last years of my life.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, that the step which I am now taking, is guided by principle. Had I one doubt as to its propriety, I would hesitate ; but I have not. My mind is clear. I think I know my duty, and I shall cheerfully perform it. I am aware many may impugn my motives, and censure me for so doing ; but if they do, I shall still pray for them. I am sure of one thing, and that is, those who know me best will give me credit for moral honesty ; and those who do not know the facts as they are, but deal in wholesale censure, as may be the case, will do it ignorantly, and I hope to put the most charitable construction upon what they may say. I know the power of prejudice, and that many good men have much of it about them. Sad experience has taught me that lesson. I shall therefore remember the simple couplet,—

“ That mercy I to others show
That mercy show to me.”

I love the Methodist church. I love her for her simplicity—for her zeal—for her unity of evangelica faith—for her experimental and practical piety. I love her for her revival spirit—for her zeal in the missionary cause—for her activity in every religious and benevolent enterprise. I love her for her institutions by which to fan up the flame of vital godliness in the church, and to keep her membership alive to God. Why should I not love her?—she has been a mother to me. She took me in youth and inexperience, and bore with my ignorance and mistakes. She has carried me in her arms, and always treated me with the utmost kindness and tenderness. Under God, I owe much to her instruction, forbearance, and fostering care. I leave her communion with deep emotion—I leave her ministry with feelings unutterable; for there are hundreds in her self-sacrificing ministry, to whom my heart has been wedded by many a “tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.” But duty directs—I must obey. My compliance is cheerful and voluntary. I leave a flourishing church to go to another equally so; and remember this is my last prayer while within the walls of the M. E. church, “Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.”

S. REMINGTON.

Lowell, Feb. 8, 1848.

THE
BAPTISMAL BALANCE

BY J. NEWTON BROWN,
EDITOR OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

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P R E F A C E.



If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. What a maxim! Though the diamond commands, it is said, a price a thousand times its own weight in gold, what is it in the sight of God compared with the lustre of a pure impartial mind—a mind ever prepared to sacrifice *party* for *truth*? But every Christian is under the most sacred obligations and solemn vows to maintain such a mind. *He that loveth father or mother more than me, says Christ, is not worthy of me.*

Baptism, it will be admitted, is not well understood by all Christians. It has given occasion to a protracted controversy—when it should have been (what in reality it is) a simple but comprehensive law of love, commanding enlightened and prompt obedience.

Our own free land affords the only field for the fair settlement of this controversy. From the days of CONSTANTINE to those of WASHINGTON, the enactments of civil power, and the anathemas of ecclesiastical councils have interfered with the discovery of Truth. Here, however, they no longer remain to disturb the judgment, to seduce the passions, or to silence *the answer of a good conscience toward God.*

As by our Lord's great Commission Baptism is made the *first* duty of his disciples, need we remark how sacred is the obligation that hence rests upon ministers of the

Gospel, and especially upon men of learning, to instruct the disciples of Christ truly in relation to their Lord's will—as Ananias instructed Paul at Damascus. *If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?* The whole responsibility of Error, with its endless train of evil consequences, may be found in *this case* beyond most others, to lie upon the *Ministry*. Let an awful fear of God, then, hold a torch before us in all our inquiries, and *the love of Christ constrain us* not only to ascertain the truth for ourselves, but also to *feed his sheep* and to *feed his lambs*.

Every good man must desire to see this unhappy strife brought to a close by the prevalence of truth and love.

To aid this desirable issue is the design of this brief treatise. It is an attempt to *weigh impartially* the principal arguments on both sides—believing that Truth *must* have a weight of evidence which, if fairly weighed in the balance, will quickly turn the scale. Truth is real *substance*, while Error is but a flattering *show*—“the shadow of a shade.”

The history of this little work is singular and curious. It was originally prepared by the Editor, in 1833, for the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE; and by the request of the Publishers of that work, submitted to the examination of Rev. Dr. JENKS of Boston, on the one side, and Rev. Dr. STOW on the other. On receiving their separate entire approval, as representatives of Pedobaptists and Baptists, it was stereotyped, and the plates remained with the rest of those cast for the ENCYCLOPEDIA, until near the time of its publication in 1835.

Early in that year, one of the Publishers (a Pedobaptist) in looking over the plate proofs, saw it; and although

it had already passed honorably the ordeal prescribed, desired permission of the author to send it to Andover for the examination of the theological professors, especially Dr. WOODS and Prof. STUART. This the author of course consented to, on condition that if any objections were raised against it, they should be sent to him in writing. After some time (during which it appears, the article had been examined also at Bangor, Maine,) he received a very courteous letter from Rev. Dr. WOODS of Andover, commending the article, as "very able, and perhaps as impartial as could be written by any man having a decided opinion." The Doctor however recommended as a better method, that the article should be divided, and two competent writers employed, each of whom should present the views and arguments of his own denomination, without seeing those of the other. This course was adopted by the Publishers of the ENCYCLOPEDIA, (who were all Pedobaptist gentlemen,) with the consent of the Editor, though at the sacrifice of his own article once deliberately approved.

After the lapse of twenty years, he now offers it to the Christian public—believing that it will be found to contain all that is vital to the questions at issue between Pedobaptists and the Baptists. He has however *added* some few things at the close of the former arguments, to meet the new phases which the controversy has since assumed by the publications of Drs. PETERS and BEECHER, Prof. WILSON and Chevalier BUNSEN.

No work is known constructed on the same principle—certainly none that is equally compressed, and that has passed the same ordeal.

J. N. B.

Philadelphia, June 29, 1853

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

ALTHOUGH it was foretold that the appropriate baptism of Christ in person, was that of the Holy Ghost; yet the baptism of water, commenced by John the Baptist, was sanctioned by our Lord; not only by his own exemplary submission to it, but by perpetuating it under his own authority and eye, in the hands of his followers. John iii. 22-24; iv. 1-3.

Some of the Jews, or of John's disciples, it seems, took occasion from this circumstance to represent the conduct of Jesus in an invidious light to John; supposing that there was some essential difference and rivalry between them. The answer of John shows that the superior success of Jesus, so far from exciting his envy, was the object of his expectation and exulting joy; inasmuch as the baptism of Jesus, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) was in fact the continuation and consummation of his own

He must increase, but I must decrease. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given ALL things into his hand. John iii. 25-26.—Baptism by water, then, whether administered by the forerunner, or by the followers of our Lord—whether before or after his resurrection—appears to be but *one baptism*; nor is there manifest any *essential* difference, either in design, subject, or mode.

Yet the Commission in Matt. xxviii. 18-20, so clearly defines the objects, as well as extends the sphere of ministerial duty, in regard to preaching, baptizing, and teaching, that it has been customary to refer to it as the definite authority on all these points, and even to consider it as the formal institution of Christian baptism. Nor can any reasonable objection be urged against this view of it; since up to the time of that great Commission, the labors of the Apostles had been limited by our Lord himself, to the single nation of the Jews. That Commission gave them authority to carry their labors to the ends of the earth; and to transmit the great work of the world's conversion to their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, to the end of time. *All authority is given unto me, (said our Lord,) in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and make all nations my disciples; baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all*

things whatsoever I have commanded you : and lo ! I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world."

The authority of this passage is allowed by all Christians, however much they may differ in expounding it. The order runs, *teach all nations, or make all nations my disciples; baptizing them; &c.* The thing speaks for itself, the style is popular, and the sense plain. It must mean, either, baptize whole nations; or such of all nations as become my disciples by believing the Gospel you preach; or believers of all nations, and their unbelieving posterity. The first is too gross to be admitted by Protestants, because it cannot be effected without force; and the grossness of the first instantly turns the mind upon the second. This is agreed by all Protestants to be the plain and true sense; although by a great majority of divines it has been thought not to exclude the additional idea contained in the third interpretation. Difference of opinion on this last point, divided the Christian world into Baptists and Pedobaptists.

Another more modern point of difference has arisen from the circumstance that the western branch of the Pedobaptist body has, for several hundred years past, relinquished immersion, and adopted sprinkling or affusion, as an equally valid and more convenient mode of administering the

ordinance of baptism. "In the bosom of a church superstitiously devoted to ancient rites and forms, there sprung up," says Prof. Stuart, "a conviction that the mode of baptism was one of the *adiaphora* of religion, i. e., something unessential to the rite itself, and which might be modified by time and place, without any encroachment upon the command itself to baptize. Gradually did this conviction increase, until the whole Roman Catholic Church, that of Milan only excepted, admitted it. By far the greater part of the Protestant world have also acceded to the same views. Even the English Episcopal Church, and the Lutheran Churches, both zealous in times past for what they supposed to be apostolic and really ancient usage, have had no serious difficulty in adopting modes of baptism quite different from that of immersion."

In the above historical statements, the candor of Prof. Stuart acquits the Baptists of all blame as to the origin of this modern difference on the *mode* of baptism.

CHAPTER II.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

It is an excellent remark of Richard Baxter, made after the experience of a long life of controversy, that “most questions in religion have need of fair stating, rather than of warm debating.” It would seem so in the case before us, and the plan of the present work, not only admits, but requires, the accomplishment of what the pious Baxter thought so desirable.

In stating the questions on which the Baptists and Pedobaptists, as such, are divided, it should be observed, in the first place, in what points they are agreed. Let it be borne in mind, then, that there is no dispute against believers as the subjects, or against immersion as the mode, of Christian baptism. These points are matters of cordial agreement on both sides. But the real questions which divide them are properly these: *Are infants, as well as believers, lawful subjects:* and, *Are pouring and sprinkling, as well as immersion, lawful modes of Christian baptism?* On both these questions Pe-

dobaptists take the affirmative, and Baptists the negative. A summary of the views and arguments of the former, as exhibited by the ablest and best writers in this country, Dr. Woods and Prof. Stuart, will here be given, together with the replies of their opponents.

I. ARE INFANTS LAWFUL SUBJECTS?

"The doctrine of Infant Baptism," says Dr. Woods, "is a doctrine which I very seriously believe, and which I feel it to be my duty earnestly to maintain. The doctrine is dear to my heart, and is associated in my contemplations with the most sacred truths of religion, and the most precious interests of Christ's kingdom. My manner of treating this subject is not the result of haste, but of repeated and long continued investigations. I am persuaded that those whose opinions I oppose, and who constitute a very large and respectable denomination of Christians, will never suspect me of being deficient in affection for them, or in readiness to do what I can to promote their welfare. For many years in the earlier part of my life, I had a decided prepossession in favor of their peculiar sentiments on the subject of Baptism; and they have a right to inquire for the reasons of my present belief. I here frankly give them my reasons. In the following Lectures they will find the prin-

cial considerations which satisfy my own mind in favor of Infant Baptism." In the second edition he adds in the same amiable spirit: "I take pleasure in acknowledging, that the strictures of my Baptist brethren have been of real use to me, and have led me to correct some mistakes, to give to some of my expressions and arguments, a more unexceptionable form, and to establish my position by some new considerations."

In treating this topic, Dr. Woods suggests the following cautions: "*First*, take care not to magnify the subject beyond its real importance. *Second*, consider that men, whose character entitles them to our affection and confidence, may be led to a different conclusion from us in regard to this rite. Whatever may have been the precepts of Christ, or his apostles, to those who enjoyed their personal instructions; it is plain that there is no *express precept* respecting Infant Baptism in our sacred writings. The proof, then, that Infant Baptism is a divine institution must be made out in another way. And that other way, though perfectly satisfactory to us, may not be so to those who have been placed in different circumstances from us by birth and education, and have formed different habits of thinking; especially concerning the *kind* or *degree of evidence* necessary to support a positive institution. *Third*. Never introduce this subject in the way of

controversy, except when a pure regard to the interests of Christ's kingdom requires it. *Fourth.* Treat those who differ from you in regard to Infant Baptism with uniform kindness. Study to do them good. Exercise towards them, not only common candor and good-will, but a *generous friendship*; and exhibit this friendship in substantial acts."

CHAPTER III

THE KIND AND DEGREE OF EVIDENCE.

“DIFFERENT conceptions respecting the proper mode of reasoning,” Dr. Woods continues, “are evidently the principal causes of the difference which exists among men in regard to the question at issue. As a preparation for a profitable discussion, therefore, it is of special consequence that you should free your minds from all mistaken apprehensions as to the *kind and degree of evidence* which is to be considered necessary. Suppose a man is accused before a court of justice of a particular crime; and suppose there is clear *circumstantial* evidence, and that only, of his guilt. If the court demand *direct, positive* proof of the crime, the evidence which they have will go for nothing, and the man, though manifestly guilty, must be pronounced innocent.—Even when the evidence sought is of the right kind; we must still take care not to mistake as to the *degree* of it which is necessary.—We are to remember also, that much depends on our prevailing disposition. The consti-

tution, or habit of the mind, and the admission of other truths allied to the one under consideration, may have the *effect of evidence*; and if it could be clearly perceived and defined, it might appear to have the *nature* of evidence.—One more remark on this point. Although the evidence, by which we are able to prove a particular truth, may be feeble or obscure; we are not hence to conclude, that it has not, even now, clear and perfect evidence in the view of those who possess a higher degree of knowledge. If you apply these remarks to the subject under consideration, you will soon be satisfied of the truth of the following position, namely: that *the want of an express positive command of Scripture, that infants should be baptized, is not to be considered as a valid objection against Infant Baptism*. As this position is of special importance, I shall take some pains to illustrate its truth.

“Admitting, as we must, that all positive religious rites are *originally* founded on a divine command; we cannot safely conclude that such a command will be repeated to all those who shall afterwards be under obligation to observe such rites, or even that the original command will be preserved, and communicated to them in the sacred writings. Sufficient evidence may be afforded in some other way—particularly, by an *unwritten*

tradition. If we should insist upon the repetition of a divine command at different times, or upon a written record of it, as indispensable; we should set aside one of the methods which God has manifestly adopted in regard to the positive institutions of religion. For example, in relation to the Christian Sabbath—Female Communion—and the authority of some of the Sacred Writings.”

To most of these general considerations suggested by Dr. Woods, the Baptists make no objection; admitting their usefulness in relation to many subjects, *but not to the positive institutions of religion.* For as Dr. Goodwin observes: “There is this difference between doctrinal truths, and divine institutions—that one *truth* may be by reason better fetched out of another, and more safely and easily, than *institutions.* For one truth begets another, and truth is infinite *in the consequences of it*; but so institutions are not.” Circumstantial and inferential evidence is very properly employed in relation to moral duties, and questions of fact; but the question concerning Infant Baptism is of another order. It is a question of *right*—not arising from natural relationship—but from positive institution. The point to be settled is simply this: Did Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, appoint the Baptism of Infants as one of the statutes of his kingdom? Is there any record of such an appointment

in his word? It is admitted by Dr. Woods, that no such record exists. But then, he adds, there is no such record of the appointment of the Christian Sabbath, Female Communion, and the Inspiration of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which yet Baptists receive. To this the Baptists reply: 1. The Epistle to the Hebrews we receive on *internal evidence that it is Paul's*, and the known fact that he was an inspired man. Its reception, however confirmed by the voice of the ancient church, does not depend merely on "*circumstantial evidence*," or on "*unwritten tradition*."—2. As to Female Communion the Lord's Supper was appointed for the observance neither of males nor females, *as such*, but for Christ's *disciples* embodied in Christian churches. See Matt. xxvi.; Acts ii.; 1 Cor. xi. The right of females to the ordinance rests on the same ground precisely as that of males—namely, *discipleship to Christ*, and a voluntary connection with His visible church. Have infants such a right?—3. In relation to the Sabbath, we have express divine institution for its observance; and apostolic example authorizing the change of the day. But for the Baptism of Infants we have neither; and but few of all who have practised it, have even pretended that it rests on any *scriptural* authority. Neither the African nor Greek Churches, the Church of Rome, nor the most learned divines of Germany, or of the Church of England, have

rested the custom of Infant Baptism on the Scriptures. Prof. Stuart says, "Commands, or plain and certain examples in the New Testament relative to it, I do not find," and even Dr. Woods himself admits "the silence of the New Testament respecting Infant Baptism." But a doctrine taught neither in the Old Testament, nor in the New; neither by precept nor example; the Baptists feel bound in conscience to reject, as belonging to "the doctrines and commandments of men;" and any mode of reasoning by which it is supported, must inevitably, in their opinion, let in a flood of the superstitions of Popery. "The term institution," says Dr. Goodman, in his Preservative against Popery, "implies a setting up *de novo*, or the appointing *that* to become a *duty* which was not knowable, or at least not known to be so, before it became so appointed. Now it is very evident, that all things of this nature ought to be appointed *very plainly* and expressly, or else they can carry no obligation with them; for seeing the whole reason of their becoming matter of law, or duty, lies in the will of the legislator; if that be not plainly discovered, they cannot be said to be *instituted*, and so there can be no obligation to observe them; because *where there is no law, there can be no transgression*; and a law is no law, in effect, which is not sufficiently promulgated."

The Rev. J. S. C. F. Frey, in his *Essays on Christian Baptism*, lays down the following clear and fundamental principles on this point:—"1. The nature of a Positive Law differs essentially from that of a moral law.—2. The obligation to obey a Positive Law arises solely from the authority of the Lawgiver.—3. The law of the institution is the only rule of obedience.—4. The law of a positive institution must be so plain and explicit, as to stand in no need of any other assistance to understand it but the mere letter of the law, like the words of a father to his family.—5. None but the Law-giver himself has a right to alter a positive institution.—6. Nothing must be added to, or taken from a positive institution.—As these principles," he adds, "are recognized by the most eminent Protestant authors as legitimate, and *used* by them as the most successful weapons in exploding the superstitions of Popery, they will be revered by their successors. That Infants are not proper subjects of Baptism, will thus appear evident from the following considerations: Every positive institution, or religious observance, not sanctioned by divine precept, or Scripture example, is unlawful and displeasing to God: sacred Scripture affords neither precept nor example for Infant Baptism; therefore, Infant Baptism is unlawful and displeasing to God."

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

THE view of the respective parties as to the *kind of evidence* has been given at length; because this is admitted on both sides to be the most vital point of the controversy; and could this be harmoniously adjusted, probably the dispute would be at an end. But till this is effected, it will be necessary to exhibit the *degree* of circumstantial evidence, which in the judgment of Dr. Woods, establishes Infant Baptism as a divine institution.

The chain of circumstantial evidence is thus stated:—"I. The rite of Infant Baptism manifestly corresponds with the natural relation between parents and children.—II. The relation between parents and children, and the consecration of both to God, was actually marked by a divinely appointed and significant rite, through the Patriarchal and Mosaic economy; the same rite being appointed for parents and children; having a primary relation to spiritual blessings, and being a confirmation to all true saints of the spiritual blessings secured

by God's covenant with Abraham.—III. The Christian Religion was evidently founded upon the Old Testament Scriptures, and was for substance a continuation of the religion there taught.—IV. We cannot certainly conclude that our Saviour did not give his apostles specific instructions on this or any other subject, merely because such instructions are not preserved in the records of the New Testament.—V. The Scriptures of the New Testament, understood according to just rules of interpretation, imply that the children of believers are to be baptized. The rule of interpretation, which is of the highest consequence, and which will aid us most in discovering the true meaning of the Scriptures in relation to the subject now before us, is, that we *put ourselves, as far as may be, in the place of those who gave instruction, and of those who received it.* Let us now come directly to the subject. Christ appointed Baptism to be administered to all who should become proselytes (*mathetas*, disciples,) to his religion, that is, to all Christians. Matt. xxviii. 18–20. “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The word *mathetesate*, rendered teach, properly signifies, *make disciples.*—1. This command *was given by one who was born a Jew*, and educated among the Jews, and was perfectly acquainted with

all their institutions and laws, with their customs and usages, and with the dispensations of Divine Providence towards them.—2. And *the command was addressed to Jews*. Now whatever there was in this general circumstance which could have influence upon the meaning of the command, or which would naturally cause it to be understood in one way or another, is worthy of special attention. Let it be considered then that the Jews had long been accustomed to make proselytes from Paganism to their religion. And whenever the Gentiles embraced the Jewish religion, they were treated in regard to circumcision according to the Jewish Law; that is, they were circumcised—*parents and children*. This was the law of the Jews; and this was the uniform practice. Hence it must be easy to determine how Christian Jews would be likely to understand the duty of proselyting idolaters and unbelievers to the true religion. Suppose it to have been the appointment of our Saviour, that circumcision should be applied to converts to Christianity, as it had been to converts to Judaism, and suppose him to have said to his Apostles: “Go ye, proselyte all nations, and circumcise them,” making no mention of *children*. Could the Apostles have doubted a moment, in such a case, whether circumcision was meant to be applied to the *children* of proselytes? But why should we suppose

they would put a different construction upon the Commission they received from Christ, because *Baptism* was made the sign of proselytes, instead of *circumcision*? especially when we add another important consideration, namely, *the previous practice of the Jews to baptize proselytes and their children*.—3. The Scriptures often represent *parents and children, as receiving the same treatment from Divine Providence*, and as being closely connected together in respect to their most important interests. This relation was as obvious and important, and as worthy of being marked by a religious rite as formerly. Thus we reason concerning the Sabbath. And this agrees with the common method of understanding a charter.—4. *The previous instructions of Christ to his Apostles* would lead them to the same inference. Matt. xix. 13, 14; Mark x. 13, 14; Luke xviii. 15, 16, from which it appears that the children of believers are members of Christ's kingdom or the Christian Church—if not in the highest sense, yet as related to it, and entitled to its privileges. If so, there could be no doubt that they were to receive the *mark* of discipleship.—5. *The conduct of the Apostles* while executing their commission seems to imply that they so understood it; since we read of their baptizing *households*, or *families*. Acts xvi. 14, 15; also, xvi. 33; and 1 Cor. i. 16.—6. *The declara-*

tion of the Apostles in their Epistles support the same construction. 1 Cor. vii. 14; Ephes. vi. 4, where the children of believers are called *holy*, i. e., consecrated, and are required to be brought up *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, i. e., as scholars in the school of Christ.—7. *The silence of the New Testament respecting the subject of Infant Baptism*: because as circumstances were, there was no occasion to enjoin it, and no occasion to discuss the subject, or even to mention it. All the Jews, those who embraced Christianity and those who rejected it, had always been accustomed to consider their children as a *holy seed*, consecrated to God, and to see them receive the seal of God's covenant. Now if Christianity had cut them off from this relation to God, and had deprived them of the sign of being consecrated to him, and had treated them as having no part or lot with God's people; can we think that such a change as this could have been made without occasioning some animadversion?—8. *The feelings of parents*. Infant Baptism, when apprehended correctly, must be agreeable to the best feelings of pious parents respecting their infant offspring; and the laws and institutions of religion are all intended to exercise and improve our benevolent and pious affections.—9. *Ecclesiastical History*. The Testimony of Ecclesiastical History on this subject, is just such as

we should expect, on the supposition that Infant Baptism was, from the beginning, universally regarded as a Christian institution. In this respect, the same remarks as have been made on the manner in which the subject is treated in the New Testament will apply generally to the earliest Christian Fathers. They had little or no occasion to enter on a particular discussion of the subject, or even to make any express mention of it. Accordingly we find in the writers who next succeeded the Apostles, only allusions to Infant Baptism. These allusions, however, are of such a nature, that they cannot well be accounted for without supposing that Infant Baptism was *the uniform practice*. But the Fathers, who wrote in the following ages, were more and more particular and explicit in their testimony. For instance, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Optatus, Gregory Nazianzen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine, Celestius, and Pelagius. Besides, in the catalogues of heresies, from Irenæus to Theodoret, the Fathers mention no sect that denied Infant Baptism, except such as denied all Baptism. And where is the evidence that Infant Baptism was an innovation? On the contrary, the testimony of the Fathers in favor of Infant Baptism as the uniform practice of the church, and an apostolic tradition, is worthy of full credit, and as the circum-

stances were, affords a conclusive argument that it was a divine institution."

To this series of arguments the Baptists briefly reply. I. That parents should religiously devote their children to the service of God is right and proper; but that Baptism is the mode of expressing such dedication, or that it has any correspondence with the *natural relation* between parents and children, does not appear from its revealed nature and design; but the contrary. Matt. iii. 6-9.—II. That *such a relation* was ever designed to be marked by circumcision is justly to be doubted; for, if so, the same reason existed for its appointment with the Patriarchs before Abraham; but it is clear that while the natural relation existed, there was no such mark in existence. Hence it follows that circumcision marked, not the common relation of pious parents and their children, but a peculiar covenant with Abraham *and his natural posterity*, which belongs to no others. See Gen. xvii.; Ps. cv.; Acts vii. 8; xv. 7-10; xxv. 21.—III. That the Christian Religion was founded on the Old Testament Scriptures, and was *for substance* a continuation of the religion there taught, we believe; but the question of Infant Baptism belongs not to *the substance* of either. And the Christian Church, Paul expressly calls a *new organization*. Ephes. ii. 15. Besides it is undeniable that *the*

substance of religion was the same with the patriarchs *before* Abraham, as afterwards. Yet there was in it no form of Infant Consecration.—IV. To suppose that our Lord gave his Apostles specific instructions in relation to positive rites, which are not recorded in the New Testament is to deny the great Protestant doctrine of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures. It is the common refuge of those who lack better evidence. But “*the Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.*”—V. The exact reverse of Dr. Woods’ fifth proposition appears to us to be true, namely: that the Scriptures of the New Testament, understood according to just rules of interpretation, imply that the children of believers are *not* to be baptized. For, according to the sound rule of interpretation he lays down, “of putting ourselves as far as may be in the place of those who gave instruction and of those who received it,” we reason thus:—1. He who gave the commission, *Go ye therefore, make all nations disciples, baptizing them, &c.*, was a Jew, who had been himself circumcised in infancy, but baptized in manhood, and who therefore did not regard circumcision and baptism as signifying the same thing.—2. Those who received the commission were Jews, who had themselves been in like manner circumcised in infancy, but baptized in manhood, on their own personal profession of repentance and faith in the approach-

ing Messiah ; and who had for a long time been actually employed by that Messiah himself in making and baptizing disciples among Jews, who had been already circumcised. John iv. 1, 2. The work assigned them in this commission was precisely the same as they had been employed in, except that it was now extended to all nations, embraced new facts and discoveries concerning the way of salvation, and had the promise of superior aids and qualifications from on high. How was it possible then for them to think of the law of *circumcision*, or the custom of *proselyte baptism*, (supposing it then existed,) as suggesting the proper interpretation of the law of Christian Baptism ? The supposition is to the last degree improbable. Their *past practice* was the natural, and the only natural mode of understanding their present commission. In their own nation they had already, under the eye and authority of their Lord, *made disciples and baptized them* ; they were now to do the same among *all nations* ; *teaching them, also, to observe all things whatsoever their Lord had commanded them*. The reasoning of Dr. Woods on this point, seems therefore void of any solid foundation. The Baptism of Infants, so far from being implied in the circumstances of Christ and his Apostles when the Commission was given, appears to be more decisively excluded by those very

circumstances.—3. That the Scriptures often represent parents and children as receiving the same treatment from Divine Providence, and being most closely connected together in respect to their most important interests, is admitted to be a fact of great moment. But that this connexion hence required to be marked by a religious rite, is very inconclusive reasoning. That it was as worthy of such a mark under the Christian, as under the Jewish dispensation, proves nothing; since circumcision marked only a *national* covenant with the Jews, and so far from being regarded as a privilege, is pronounced by the Apostle Peter, “a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.” Acts xv. 10. The Sabbath stands on a footing so different that it is impossible to reason justly from the one to the other. And as to Charters, such as are *national* are, it is true, understood to include children with their parents, but not such as are founded on the principle of *voluntary association*. Judaism was a *national* religion; but Christianity is not. The right to circumcision was *hereditary*; but the right to baptism is not. *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father.* Matt. iii. 9. *If thou believest with all thine heart it is lawful.* Acts viii. 37. Even if previously baptized in infancy, *the law of Christ requires every one who becomes his disciple to be baptized;*

nor can the obligation be possibly evaded, without doing violence to the language of the Commission.

—4. The previous instructions of Christ to his Apostles, Matt. xix. 13, 14, &c., concerning little children, say nothing of their baptism; but encourage them *to come to him*, on the ground, that *of such (i. e., of such as come to him,) is the kingdom of heaven*. But such as come to Christ, even though they be little children, are believers. It is not by the *first* birth, but by being “*born again*,” that any enter into the kingdom of God. John iii 3–8. The children of believing parents are no exceptions, and to interpret the words of Christ in Matt. xix. 13, 14, &c., in the Pedobaptist sense, is not to explain but to contradict him. As to a higher and lower sense of belonging to his kingdom, the distinction wants proof.—5. The conduct of the Apostles while executing their commission, appears not to imply a thought of baptizing any, except such as had been *made disciples*. Household baptisms naturally followed household conversions, of which we have examples in John iv. 53; Acts x. 2, and xviii. 8; and in the instances referred to by Dr. Woods, the evidence is complete that the families of Lydia, of the Philippian Jailer, and of Stephanas, were converts to Christ. Nor is there the slightest evidence of an infant among them.—6. The holiness of which the

Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. vii. 14, in relation to children, is evidently neither legitimacy on the one hand, nor is it *internal* holiness, nor *federal* holiness, on the other. The connexion and scope plainly show the meaning to be, that in consequence of the abrogation of the Jewish ceremonial law which forbid all connexion with unbelievers, (see Acts x. and xi.) both the unbelieving parent and children are *ceremonially sanctified*, that is to say, no bar remains to the believer's domestic intercourse with them. That the children of believers should be *brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, we cordially agree. This duty is plainly commended; but their baptism is not. And we beseech our brethren to observe, that in all the Epistles to the Churches there is not one exhortation to parents or children founded on the supposition of the children having been dedicated to God in baptism. How could this have happened had Infant Baptism been as "dear to the heart" of the Apostles as to Dr. Woods? Especially had it been "associated in their contemplations" as in his, "with the most sacred truths of religion, and the most precious interests of Christ's kingdom?" —7. Since the silence of Scripture on this point, is admitted by Dr. Woods, it is natural to ask, What greater occasion there can be *now* to insist on Infant Baptism, than in the age of the New Testa-

ment? Let us be silent, where God is so in His word, lest we be found at last *to have taught for doctrines the commandments of men*. Had Infant Baptism come in the place of Circumcision, as the seal of the same covenant, why did not the Apostles say so? How readily in that case, would the Jewish believers have been satisfied to abandon the bloody rite of circumcision; since they could thus secure the same advantages by a rite far less burdensome. Acts xv.; Gal. v. But circumcision was forbidden only to Gentile believers, not to the Jews. Hence the privileges of their children being undiminished, the Jews had no cause of complaint, though baptism was not given them. Acts xxi. 20-25.—

8. The feelings of pious parents prove nothing; since they are in favor of Infant Baptism or against it, according to their views of God's word. A pious parent, if a Baptist, is anxious to have his children enjoy every appointed means of grace; but his best feelings are shocked and grieved by the baptism of infants, because in his view it is a profanation of a divine institution designed for a different end, and fraught not with a blessing, but a curse to the church of God. "To me it appears evident," says Andrew Fuller, "that Pedobaptism opened the door for the Romish Apostacy; and that the Church will never be restored to its purity, while it is allowed to have any existence in it." (Complete

Works, Vol. III. p. 555.)—9. The evidence from Ecclesiastical History of the existence of Infant Baptism, on which any reliance can be placed, does not begin until the time of Tertullian in the third century. Neither of the Apostolic Fathers, Clement, Hermas, Barnabas, Ignatius, or Polycarp, make any mention of it. Justin Martyr's account of Christian baptism, in his Second Apology, A. D. 150, is inconsistent with it. And Tertullian (*De Baptismo*) directly opposes it as an error peculiar to the Quintillanists, a sect of Montanists, which arose about A. D. 200. Fifty years after, it was sanctioned by Cyprian and his friends at the Council of Carthage; and thenceforward gradually prevailed, partly through false opinions and partly through force. But it never became universal among Christians. The testimony of the Fathers extends only to the Catholic Churches; and even were it not liable to just doubt, comes *too late* to prove Infant Baptism a divine institution.

The recent discovery of a lost work of Hippolytus, bishop of Portus, the new harbor of Rome, (A. D. 198–236,) has thrown new light upon this historical question. The result is thus stated by Chevalier Bunsen: "*Pedobaptism*, in the more modern sense—meaning thereby the baptism of new-born infants, with the vicarious promises of parents or sponsors—*was utterly unknown in the early church*;

not only down to the end of the second, but indeed to the middle of the third century. As in other cases the *origin* was innocent, and I think that we are at this moment better able than either the defenders or opponents of Infant Baptism have hitherto been, to explain *how it originated*. A passage in our Alexandrian Church-Book gives the true explanation of the assertion of Origen, himself an Alexandrian, that the baptism of children was an apostolical tradition ; and it removes the origin of Infant Baptism from Tertullian and Hippolytus to the end of our present period—*Cyprian being the first father, who impelled by a fanatical enthusiasm, and assisted by a bad interpretation of the Old Testament, established it as a principle.*"

CHAPTER V.

ARE OTHER MODES THAN IMMERSION LAWFUL

PROF. STUART begins the discussion of this point by an investigation of the radical meaning of the original terms. "The original etymological root of the verbs *baptizo*, *bapto*," he observes, "as also of the nouns *baptisis*, *baptisma*, *baptismos*, *baptisterion*, *baptistes*, *baptria*, *baphe*, *bapheis*, *bapheion*, *baphike*, *bapsis*, and in like manner of the adjectives or verbals *baptos*, *bapnikos*, *bapsimos*, —appears plainly to be the monosyllable BAP. In all the words derived from this root, there is a similarity of meaning, which shows an intimate connexion between them. The leading and original meaning of BAP seem, to have been *dipping*, *plunging*, *immersion*, *soaking* or *drenching* in some liquid substance. As kindred to this meaning, and closely connected with it, i. e., as an effect resulting from such a cause, the idea of *dyeing*, *coloring*, *tinging*, seems also to have been often associated with the original root, and to have passed into many of its derivatives. For example; *baptos*,

dipped, immersed, colored; *bapto*, to dip, plunge, dye, color; *bapheus*, a dyer, usually limited to this signification, &c. The reader," he adds, "is desired particularly to notice, that while most of the nouns derived from BAP have a twofold sense, that of *immersion*, and that of *dyeing*, yet some of them are employed only in one sense exclusively, either that of *immersion* or that of *dyeing*. We shall see, in the sequel, that the verbs *bapto* and *baptizo* have distinctions of meaning analogous to these—distinctions which are never confounded by usage; while they both agree in one common and original meaning, viz.: that of *immersion* or *plunging*." The Professor goes on to show that in the New Testament, "*baptizo* and its derivatives are exclusively employed *when the rite of baptism is to be designated* in any form whatever; and in this case *bapto* seems purposely, as well as habitually, *excluded*. It (*baptizo*) is *not*, like this latter word (*bapto*), used to designate the idea of *coloring* or *dyeing*; and the ancient opinions which regards it as a *frequentative*, and common criticism "which makes it a *diminutive*, have no foundation in truth." The termination *zo*, or rather *izo*, which led to these false opinions, Dr. Judson and Dr. Carson, in perfect harmony with Prof. Stuart, have proved to give *baptizo* the sense of a *causative*; thus *bapto* to dip, *baptos* dipped, *baptizo*

to make to dip, to put any thing into the element, or under the influence of another. In speaking of their classic usage, Prof. Stuart says, "*Bapto* and *baptizo* mean to dip, plunge, or immerge, into any thing liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this. All other senses" he adds, "are variations from this usual and prevailing signification; i. e., shades of meaning kindred to this, (as happens in respect to most words) some literal and some figurative." Thus "the word *baptizo* means to overwhelm, literally and figuratively in a variety of ways." This, we may add, is the only variation of meaning assigned to *baptizo* in the classics. In the Septuagint and Apocrypha *baptizo* occurs but four times, 2 Kings v. 14; Isaiah xxi. 4; Judith xii. 7; and Sirach xxxi. 25, in the sense of *plunging*, *overwhelming*, and *washing the person and clothes*.

Thus far, it will be observed, Prof. Stuart cannot be said to advance any thing to which Baptists in general would object. Whatever they may think of the various shades of meaning he assigns to *bapto*, they regard them by his own showing, as set aside from this controversy; while *baptizo* the only word used in relation to the ordinance of baptism in the New Testament, appears to have had an established and uniform signification in the popular language, literally to immerse, and by an

easy and beautiful metaphor, *to overwhelm as with a flood*. Prof. Stuart gives numerous examples of this common usage; as baptized, (i. e., immersed, overwhelmed, buried,) in a flood tide; in wine; in sleep; in taxes; in excessive labors; in debts; in business; in drunkenness; in sins. He gives among other examples from Chrysostom, the most eloquent of the Greek fathers, the following fine figurative expression: "baptized on all sides by the many waves of business."

In the New Testament, Prof. Stuart first considers the passages where *baptizo* and its derivatives occur literally, but without reference to the ordinances of baptism. Mark vii. 3, 4; Luke xi. 38; Mark vii. 4-8; Heb. ix. 10; all which, as we have already seen, though translated *washing*, afford no evidence whatever against immersion. He next examines the figurative use of *baptizo* in Luke xii. 50; Mark x. 38, 39; Matt. xx. 22, 23; and 1 Cor. xv. 29, which he explains by the classic sense of *overwhelm*; quoting by way of illustration, Ps. lxix. 1-14; xviii. 16; xxxii. 6; xlii. 7. "To Hebrews and Greeks both (he remarks,) the idea of an *overwhelming flood* offered a very obvious image to designate great sorrows and afflictions. Both therefore employ it. Inasmuch now as the more usual idea of *baptizo* is that of *overwhelming, immersing*, it was very natural to em-

ploy it in designating severe calamities and sufferings." He adds, "there is another *figurative* use of *baptizo*, allied in some respects to the preceding one, but distinguished from it in the mode of its application. I mean that usage of the word, which employs it to designate the idea of *copious affusion*, in a figurative manner. The basis of this usage is very plainly to be found in the designation by *baptizo* of the idea of *overwhelming*, i. e., of surrounding on all sides with fluid. For example, Matt. iii. 11, *He shall (baptisei) BAPTIZE you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* See also Luke iii. 16; Mark i. 8; John i. 33; Acts i. 5; xi. 17: 1 Cor xii. 13.

Prof. Stuart then states the main question, "*Do BAPTIZE and its derivatives, when applied to designate the RITE OF BAPTISM necessarily imply that this rite was performed by IMMERSION of the whole person?*" And for an answer to this question he examines, 1. The general *usus loquendi*; 2. The circumstances of its administration; 3. The Jewish Proselyte Baptism; 4. Ecclesiastical History. It is unnecessary to give, here, any thing more than his general conclusion. "For myself, then, I cheerfully admit, that *baptizo* in the New Testament, when applied to the rite of Baptism, does in all probability involve the idea, that this rite was usually performed by immersion, but not always

I say *usually*, and *not always*; for to say more than this, the tenor of some of the narratives, particularly in Acts x. 47, 48; xvi. 32, 33; and ii. 41, seem to me to forbid. I cannot read these examples without the distinct conviction that *immersion* was not practised on these occasions, but *washing*, or *affusion*."

To this conclusion the Baptists reply: that to urge *supposed* difficulties against the established meaning of words, is a mode of proceeding arbitrary and unphilosophical—that it introduces endless uncertainty, doubts, quibbles, evasions, disputes, divisions—that this unsound mode of interpretation is the root of Universalist and Unitarian errors—and that until it is abandoned by Protestants, *the unity of the faith* can never be restored, nor the church of Christ *be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment*. That in the examples referred to by Prof. Stuart, unless the difficulty actually amounted to an *impossibility*, it would not set aside the established meaning of the word in question—that by his own admission it does not amount to an impossibility—and that whatever be imagined, no positive proof is given of any difficulty at all—that as the Apostles must unavoidably have understood the command to baptize of *immersion*, from uniform and habitual usage, (not one clear case being produced of a

different meaning,) so as conscientious men, they would not feel themselves at liberty to depart from the language of their Master's Commission, in administering it. They further object to the mode in which Prof. Stuart has stated the main question, affirming that in justice they are not bound in every case to prove its meaning anew, and that the burden of proof in such cases, rests entirely on those who deny that it has its usual signification. They say that the true question between them and Prof. Stuart is this : "*Is there any certain evidence in a single case, that baptizo and its derivatives, when applied to designate the Rite of Baptism, mean any thing short of an overwhelming, or immersion ?*"—"Till positive proof of a different meaning is produced," they hold that "all conscientious men are bound to practise immersion, on peril of disobeying an express command of Christ, and of seducing others into the same course of disobedience."—See CARSON ON BAPTISM.

CHAPTER VI.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS QUESTION.

BUT this view of the case introduces another main point of difference—namely: *the Degree of Importance to be attached to the Mode of Baptism.* On the principle of the Baptists, it is evident that what is called the *mode* of baptism is as important as the ordinance itself, neither *more* nor *less*; for if immersion was commanded, nothing but immersion fulfills the command; and to call *pouring* or *sprinkling* of water a *mode of baptism*, is to call it a *mode of immersion*, which is manifestly false and absurd. But on the principles of their opponents, that no particular mode is enjoined, the application of water in any mode or quantity is alike called baptism, and the mode, of course, is looked upon as a matter of indifference. Multitudes of writers, both Catholic and Protestant, have often and fully expressed this latter view of the subject. Calvin, for example, in his celebrated Institutes, says, “It is of no consequence at all, whether the person baptized is totally immersed, or whether he is

merely sprinkled by an affusion of water. This should be a matter of choice to the churches in different regions; although the word *baptize* signifies *to immerse*, and the rite of immersion was practised by the ancient church." Prof. Stuart, after quoting the above words of Calvin, adds, "To this opinion I do most fully and heartily subscribe; not because it is Calvin's, nor because the great majority of Christians have adopted it. I have other, and, I trust, better reasons than either of these; and it is proper that I should now give them.—1. *The rite in question is merely external; and does not therefore enter into the essence of religion.* God who is himself a Spirit requires the homage of our spirits. All else is nothing while this is withheld; and when this is given, all else is *circumstance*, not *essence*.—2. *No injunction is given in the New Testament respecting the manner in which this rite shall be performed.* In this respect it resembles the Lord's Supper, in which no one thinks it necessary to observe precisely the original time, place, posture, or other circumstances. But on Baptist principles, if all these are not observed how is the command of Jesus obeyed, **THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME?** If it be said the command is substantially fulfilled by the use of the appropriate symbolic element of nourishment and refreshment, i. e., bread and wine, the same answer

may be given in relation to baptism. "Is not the substance of baptism," asks Prof. Stuart, "the symbolizing of purity or purification? This, I hope, will not be denied. If, then, water be applied in any such way as to make the symbol or emblem significant or expressive, and highly so, then is the main purpose of the rite answered.—But after the examples which have been adduced of the *significancy of sprinkling*, both from the Old Testament and the New, I consider this significancy as a point made out. The great body of Christians have come to the same conclusion. And it is remarkable that not one of the ancient pictures, so far as I have discovered, represents baptism as performed by *immersion*."—3. *Personal safety and convenience often demand that immersion should be dispensed with; and therefore at least it cannot well be supposed that it is in all cases necessary.* So thought Cyprian and the ancient church, in relation to cases of sickness. To which may be added, cases where access to water abroad is difficult, dangerous, or impossible; and where the infirm health of the officiating minister, or of the person to be baptized, forbids the exposure of himself in this way. If it is said, these difficulties can be avoided by the use of baptisteries, I reply, these on Baptist principles are inadmissible, because they are a departure from apostolic usage. Besides it

is notorious that when baptisteries came into use, it was also customary to baptize people naked. If the custom of the ancient church be authoritative as to immersion, why not be consistent and carry it through? On this ground the whole apparatus of ancient superstition might be brought in on the churches of the present day.—If my sentiments go to show my Baptist friends that I believe them to be in error in regard of their zeal about immersion, they show no more than what is matter of fact. I do believe that this is the *sectarianism* of their denomination; and moreover that it does not accord well in this particular with the elevated and spiritual views which, at such a time of light as the present, ought to be cherished. My belief is, that on such excessive attachment to the mere externals of religion, are justly chargeable the divisions and feuds of Christians in relation to the mode of baptism; and that the church never can have peace, until men will cease from the spirit of contention about matters of costume in religion, and leave every one to his own choice in this respect. For one, I believe that the liberty of Christ entitles us to be free from a spirit of zeal for externals; nor do I think it probable that the churches in general will ever be entangled again in such a yoke of bondage. Is not the case of Hezekiah in 2 Chron. xxx. 18-20, fraught with instruction, as to the real

value which the Bible sets upon *externals*? It does seem to me to be so; and I wish my brethren who bar up their communion-table against all who have not been immersed, might study such passages with more attention. It is too late. The Spirit will triumph at last over the flesh; the love of God, and of fellow-Christians redeemed by a Saviour's blood, will burst asunder the manacles of rites and forms, and dispel the charms of sectarian persuasions; and there will yet be in our American churches, 'one Lord, and one faith;' yea, and 'one baptism' also, inasmuch as variety of mode will no longer be regarded as infringing upon the unity of this rite."

To this the Baptists reply: 'That a less lofty tone would appear more becoming in the advocates of *an acknowledged innovation*; especially when it is considered that the innovation began in the corrupt and apostate Church of Rome, and that it yet remains to be determined at a higher tribunal, whether the divine Author of the institution will justify the change. That for their part, they have not the slightest wish to bind the conscience of any one, where Christ has left it free; but that the very point in question is, whether the command of Christ is not binding on the conscience of all his disciples, in relation to *immersion*. That though the reasons for substituting *sprinkling* under the

cover of the original name, may seem sufficient to their brethren, they not only have a *right* to examine them, but that it is a *duty* to do so ; and, if not convinced beyond a doubt of their validity, they are bound by their love to their erring brethren, no less than by their fidelity to Christ, to protest against them ; meekly indeed, but earnestly ; prudently, no doubt, but still perseveringly, publicly, and frankly. That if their brethren think it right to plead so warmly for mere custom or convenience, it seems not quite brotherly to affix the stigma of *sectarianism* on those who plead purely for the sake of a good conscience, and for the honor of their common Lord, that *in the beginning it was not so*. At least, they ask an impartial hearing of their reasons for believing that such a change of a divine institution is not a matter of indifference, but morally wrong, and fraught with a deep and dread responsibility in the sight of Him who ordained the institution.

For, 1. Although the rite of baptism be *external*, yet the simple fact that it is divinely commanded, proves that its observance enters into the *essence* of a Christian's obedience. *If ye love me*, says the Saviour, *keep my commandments*.—2. If “the word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*,” as both Calvin and Prof. Stuart agree, then so far from there being no injunction in the New Testament as to the

mode of symbolic purification, there is such an injunction just as often as there is an injunction to *baptize*. The case of the Lord's Supper furnishes no evidence to the contrary; since it is clear that when our Saviour said: "THIS DO in remembrance of me," he referred simply to the specific *act* enjoined in commemoration of his life-giving sacrifice; and not to the *accidental circumstances* in which it was performed. In like manner, when he gave commission to baptize, he enjoined simply the act of immersion in the most glorious of names, as a symbol of that purification from sin, and consecration to God, which is effected, not partially, but thoroughly in every believer, through his death, burial, and resurrection. He did not say simply, *purify them by water*, and by so doing leave his disciples to their own choice concerning the mode; but he said definitely, *baptize* them, and it is conceded that the word *baptize* signifies to *immerse*. All nations, all ages, were before Him. His eye looked to every possible case that could arise in the long course of a world's conversion, yet He said concerning them all, *immerse* them. This then is the law of Christ. There is no other. Our duty is discharged by receiving it as it is, and obeying it. The place, the time, the circumstances, even the mode of the immersion, are not prescribed; but the immersion itself as a solemn and expressive

symbol, not merely of consecration to God in general, but of *the Christian manner of consecration to God through Christ*, is specifically prescribed. Hence the specific appeal founded on it, in Rom. vi. 1-14-23; which on any other view of the subject is null and void. *That specific significancy*, sprinkling does not, and cannot, supply; nor does even Prof. Stuart attempt to do it; since his whole argument comes to this only, that water, however applied, is expressive of purification. This may be admitted, without advancing one step in the proof that immersion, under the Christian law, is unnecessary, useless, or uncommanded. For had the Saviour preferred sprinkling, He would have said, not *baptize*, but *rautize*, which Prof. Stuart knows is the Greek word always used in the New Testament to signify *sprinkling*. See Heb. ix. 13-19-21; x. 22; xii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 2. We are not called to construct a new symbol, but to conform to one already prescribed by a better wisdom than ours.—If human authority were at all admissible in deciding on the question of *significancy*, the Baptists could appeal to the highest names in Christendom as deciding it in favor of immersion. The free-hearted child and the ingenuous critic, alike feel and confess this. And as to the pictures of baptism mentioned by Prof. Stuart, a solution is furnished by Mr. Robinson, who quotes authorities to

show that these are but pictorial or fanciful modes of representing a *total immersion*.—3. Baptists do not deny that personal convenience and safety may be lawfully consulted in the administration of baptism; provided only that it is baptism itself, i. e., the *immersion* of a professed believer, which is administered. They do not, (as Prof. Stuart appears to do through his whole argument,) confound the *rite prescribed*, with the *circumstances* in which it is performed. They have always held, as Tertullian has well expressed it, that “there is no difference, whether any one is washed in a pool, river, lake, or canal; nor is there any difference of consequence between those whom John immersed in the Jordan, or Peter in the Tiber.” On their principles a bath or a baptistery is a perfectly lawful place of baptism; since Christ has left his Church perfectly free in relation to the circumstances in which the immersion He prescribed shall be performed. No matter where or what the place in which the necessary element is found, *if thou believest with all thine heart* (EXESTIN,) IT IS LAWFUL.—Nor are they responsible for any indecorums, or superstitious practices, in the churches of Greece or Rome in the fourth century, as they hold nothing of the kind, and look not to those corrupt churches for authority, but to the SCRIPTURES alone. Much less are they “chargeable with the divisions and

feuds of Christians in relation to the mode of baptism," as Prof. Stuart supposes; since the burden of that charge, in all justice, belongs, not to those who conscientiously contend for the *primitive mode*, but to those who contend for a *change* on the principles of expediency.—That intemperate zeal has sometimes been manifested on both sides is very probable; but that zeal for the purity of divine worship, *even in things external*, is not offensive to GOD, is evident from the example of Him who said, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*.—For their own part, they have no more doubt, (notwithstanding any opinion to the contrary,) that the followers of the Redeemer will yet return to the practice of immersion than they have of the truth of Him who has said; *Every plant that my Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up*. Meanwhile they will continue from the heart to pray, as they have long prayed, in the spirit of King Hezekiah, *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek GOD, the LORD GOD of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary*.—So far from "barring up their communion table," they view it as truly the Lord's, and open to all who come in the way he has appointed. And they think it one thing to pray for the pardon of their erring brethren, and another to sanc-

tion their error, and thus become *partakers of other men's sins*.

Of the justness of the views and arguments on both sides, let every one judge for himself, upon due inquiry, in the fear of GOD.

CHAPTER VII.

VIEWS OF DRS. PETERS AND BEECHER.

SINCE the foregoing little work was first prepared, there has been an attempt made, especially in New England, to give a new phase to the Baptismal Question by a publication of the Rev. Ab-salom Peters, D. D., (formerly Editor of the American Eclectic, and of the American Biblical Repository, now of Williamstown, Mass.,) entitled "Sprinkling the only Scriptural Mode of Baptism." Of this publication, however, we can only say, in the kindest manner, that it sheds no new light whatever on the controversy. "What is *new* is not true, and what is *true* is not new." It has been effectually answered by Rev. J. Torrey Smith.

An effort of far higher order has been put forth by Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., formerly President of Illinois College, now of Boston. President Beecher rejects all previous views as unsatisfactory, because not comprehensive of all the facts, necessary to a true solution of the problem involved in the meaning of βαπτίζω, (*baptizo*); and concludes

that all the conditions to a final settlement of this vexed question unite in giving it the sense of *purify*. To sustain this view he has amassed a rich treasure of erudition, especially from the Greek fathers, and has employed an amount of exegetical tact, logical skill, and rhetorical beauty, rarely if ever displayed on the question in this country. In point of sheer ability, it seems to us immeasurably before all other works on the Podo-baptist side of the question.

What then is its defect? The want of a solid foundation. The new theory is a perfect illusion. The whole secret appears to lie in *a casual, but unsound association of ideas*, grounded originally upon the passage in John iii. 25, 26. Explanatory words are not always *equivalent* in meaning; the one may be a *generic* sense, the other *specific*; hence to hold them as equivalent on the strength of a single passage, in defiance of the clearest common usage, is simply absurd. This false association, however, once fixed in the mind, acts like a magnetic force upon fine machinery, in disturbing the judgment, and imposing a false theory upon the imagination, which colors all facts, and connects them together, in unreal combinations. This is the case with Dr. Beecher's theory. Men of cooler, sober judgment, though leaning to the same side of the question, and wishing to defend it, see

through the fallacy of his main position, and do not hesitate to say with Prof. Stuart of Andover, "The theory is very beautiful; but *it wants bottom.*"

The theory thus characterized by Prof. Stuart, has been exposed with some severity by Dr. Carson, in his great work on Baptism, and since that severity has been urged by Dr. Beecher to parry the effect of the argument, it will better harmonize with the impartiality of purpose in the "Baptismal Balance," here to insert the views of the most elegant if not the most erudite critic whom this controversy has recently called forth in Great Britain. I refer to the Rev. Robert Wilson, Professor of Sacred Literature in the Royal College, Belfast, Ireland, selected by the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster to answer Dr. Carson. His work appeared in London, in 1848, in a handsome octavo of 532 pages. I quote from pages 182-185."

"On a first inspection the case seems strong for President Beecher, and the entire class of purifiers, who certainly occupy a respectable position in the baptismal controversy. But whatever may be its apparent strength, we apprehend it labors under *the fatal defect of a want of evidence*. We are able to produce what we conceive to be decisive instances of the use of βαπτίζω, (*baptizo*), where there is and can be no immersion; but never, even in a

solitary instance, have we encountered it in the sense of 'purification.' That meaning, as it appears to us, cannot be extracted from the verb, without recourse to questionable analogies and reasonings, which betray a larger measure of theological ingenuity than of philological acumen. The case on behalf of 'purification,' we think, therefore, might be equitably disposed of by the Scottish verdict of 'not proven;' thus leaving the way perfectly open for the reception of any new evidence, which its advocates may have it in their power to bring forward. That their writings contain some striking illustrations of the sense for which they contend, is freely admitted; but we are not aware that they have hitherto succeeded in *proving* by clear examples, the existence of that sense, and thus constructing a legitimate basis for their illustrations.

"We have been led to view the question in a considerably different light. Purification, in our judgment, is not baptism; though it may be, and often is, the immediate result of baptism. A contrary result, however, far from being impracticable, we find occasionally exemplified, as in *Aquila's* translation of Job x. 31, *Εν διαφθορᾷ βαπτίζεις με*, "Thou baptizest me in corruption." One such instance, even apart from the obvious nature of the case, proves that the result will be defilement or purification, according to the character

of the baptizing element. Consequently, if we would avoid the absurdity of attaching opposite meanings to the same term, we must employ the verb to denote simply the *process*, without including the result, which is necessarily implied in purification.

“With this distinction the usage of the Greek language appears to be strictly harmonious. Whether the baptizing element overwhelms its object, or simply opens to receive it, or presents any other variety of application, a certain process takes place, which may issue in great diversity of result, the result to be collected from the context, or the general circumstances of each occurrence.”

Such is the luminous and candid opinion of perhaps the highest living philological authority in Great Britain on the Pedobaptist side of this question.

CHAPTER VIII.

SCRIPTURAL DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

A DUE regard to the doctrinal import and design of this New Testament ordinance would probably go farther than all the learning and ingenuity which have been employed in managing the controversy on either side, to establish the mind of an inquirer, both as to the proper subjects and mode of administration. For it is plain that the value of signs depends chiefly upon the importance of the things signified. And as Dr. Owen observes, "There is nothing in Religion that hath any efficiency for compassing an end, but it hath it from God's appointment of it to that purpose. God may, in his wisdom, appoint and accept of ordinances and duties unto one end, which he will refuse and reject when they are applied to another. To do any thing appointed unto an end, without aiming at that end, is no better than the not doing it at all, in some cases much worse." The *design* of baptism, therefore, as taught in the New Testament, and the *practical uses* to which it is there

applied, ought to be thoroughly investigated by both ministers and people ; in order that they may know and comply with the revealed intention of God in its appointment.

“It is generally agreed among divines,” says the learned Venema, “that the communion of a believer with Christ, and the effects of his obedience by which the guilt, the pollution, and the punishment of sin, are taken away, and so the remission of sin, sanctification, and glorification are conferred, are presented to view in baptism ; yet they do not sufficiently show the way and manner in which that representation is made, and frequently speak with but little consistency. If in baptism, the appearance of nothing but *washing* presented itself to our consideration, the thing would be easy. For seeing we are delivered from sin by the obedience of Christ, that would be readily understood by every one as the cause of our purification, and as represented by water, in which there is a cleansing virtue ; especially as the Scripture usually comprehends it under the emblem of water. But washing is neither the only idea, nor, as I think, the principal one of this institution.”

The principal and most comprehensive design of this ordinance appears from the Scriptures to be
A SOLEMN, PUBLIC, AND PRACTICAL PROFESSION
OF CHRISTIANITY. Thus Paul sums up the Bap-

tism of John in Acts xix. 4. "John verily baptized with the baptism of REPENTANCE, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on CHRIST JESUS." And thus he describes his own. Gal. iii. 27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, HAVE PUT ON CHRIST." To the same purpose are the words of Peter on the day of Pentecost; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST." Hence also a rejection of baptism, is by our Lord called a REJECTION OF THE COUNSEL OF GOD, that is, of Christianity. Luke vii. 30; Acts xx. 27. And the reception of baptism is represented as the act by which we JUSTIFY GOD; that is, practically approve His method of salvation by faith in the Messiah. Luke vii. 29.—Hence whatever may be said of baptism as it is now generally understood and practised, and of the personal religion of those who practise it, it is certain that *it was originally appointed to be the boundary of visible Christianity.*

But this general design of baptism comprehends many particulars. Christianity consists partly of truths to be believed, partly of precepts to be obeyed, and partly of promises to be hoped for; and this its initiatory ordinance is rich in significancy in relation to them all. We are taught to regard it:

1. AS THE SOLEMN PROFESSION OF OUR FAITH IN

THE HOLY TRINITY. John i. 33; Matt. iii. 16, 17; xxviii. 19; Ephes. ii. 18; Tit. iii. 4-7,—particularly—*of our adoption by the Father*. Gal. iii. 26-29; iv. 1-7; John i. 12, 13; 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18; 1 John iii. 1-3,—*of our union to the Son*. Acts viii. 35-39; Rom. vi. 3-14; Col. ii. 12, 13-20; iii. 1-11; Matt. xx. 22, 23; 1 Pet. iii. 18-22; 1 Cor. i. 30,—*of our sanctification by the Spirit*. John iii. 5-8; vii. 37-39; xiv. 15-17: 26, 27; xvi. 12-15; Acts ii. 38, 39; Rom. viii. 1-27; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Gal. iii. 2, 3; iv. 6, 7; v. 22-25; Ephes. i. 11-14; iv. 30; v. 9.—2. As the PUBLIC PLEDGE OF THE RENUNCIATION, AND REMISSION OF SINS. Mark i. 4, 5; Acts ii. 38; xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 4.—3. As the EXPRESSION OF OUR HOPE OF A FUTURE AND GLORIOUS RESURRECTION. Rom. vi. 5; Col. iii. 1-4; 1 Cor. xv. 29.—4. As A VISIBLE BOND OF UNION AMONG CHRISTIANS. 1 Cor. xii. 3-31; Ephes. iv. 5. Baptism, therefore, is designed to give a sort of epitome of the whole system of Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

PERPETUITY OF THE LAW OF BAPTISM.

ALTHOUGH Christians have been generally agreed that Baptism was delivered to the primitive churches as an ordinance of universal and perpetual obligation, yet there have been some, and two bodies of Christians in particular, who have, on different grounds, denied or questioned its perpetuity—QUAKERS and ANTI-BAPTISTS.—The first class consider all external forms, in which they include Baptism and the Lord's Supper, rather as obstructions than aids to spiritual worship; and hence interpret the Apostolic Commission either of Baptism with the Holy Ghost, or limit its duration to the close of the Jewish economy, as being rather a part of the Baptism of John than of Christ. They quote, in favor of these views, Matt. iii. 11; John iii. 30: 1 Cor. xii. 13; Ephes. iv. 5; and 1 Cor. i. 17. The second class derive their opinion chiefly from the supposition that Christian Baptism is a continuation of Jewish Proselyte Baptism; from which they argue that it ought not to be administered to any but converted Pagans, Mahomedans,

and others who did not previously receive Christianity as the true religion.

Both of these classes of Christians have been requested to consider :—1. That the Apostles themselves understood their Commission of *baptizing in water*; as is clear from their practice recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.—2. That to *baptize with the Holy Ghost*, or put the soul under his divine influence, is the prerogative of Christ alone. John i. 33; viii. 37–39; Acts i. 4–8; ii. 1–4.—3. That so far from regarding the Baptism of the Spirit as superseding the Baptism of Water, Peter, in the house of Cornelius, urges it as a divine evidence of the propriety of the latter; *Who can forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Acts x.—4. That this therefore is “the one baptism; to which the Apostle refers as being a visible bond of union among Christians; the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, (superior as it is in importance,) being so called, not literally, but by a rich and beautiful metaphor, indicating the overwhelming abundance of his holy influences and endowments. *Be ye filled with the Spirit.* Ephes. v. 18; John vii. 37–39.—5. That the Christian Law of Baptism could not have been derived from that of Jewish Proselytes; because

many such Proselytes were baptized, as the Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius, and others, which proves either that the Christian administrators knew no such custom as Proselyte Baptism, or that they re-baptized those who had received it.—6. That the Apostles in their writings drew from the baptism of their converts the most powerful motives to a life of spiritual holiness.—7. That our Lord himself honored the ordinance by his own example; and that while it is safe to obey and imitate him, it must be dangerous to set aside or slight *even the least* of his commandments. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* John xv. 14 *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* John xiv. 21. Lastly. Christians are exhorted to *hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and to draw nigh to the throne of grace, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water*; which they cannot do unless baptized. Heb. x. 22, 23. Whence it follows that baptism in water, however, and to whomsoever it is to be administered, is a Christian ordinance of perpetual obligation.

Others have stated the argument thus:—We have seen that Christianity and its laws are of perpetual obligation—that baptism is a part of Christianity in its complete form—that the example of

Christ in this particular is binding on all his disciples, through all ages—that the perpetuity of baptism is implied in the nature of the ordinance, as an act of worship, a monument of the Saviour's death, burial and resurrection, a symbol of the renunciation of sin, and the new birth to righteousness, a solemn self-dedication to the Saviour, a public recognition of our adoption as the children of God, and of our hope of a glorious resurrection—that the promise connected with the institution prophetically declares its perpetuity—that baptism is inwrought in the law of the institution with some other things which are acknowledged to be of perpetual obligation, as teaching and believing—and that the apostles understood it to be perpetual, and derived from it motives to holiness, which are now powerless upon any other supposition than that the ordinance is still to be regarded. Now in view of all these things what shall we say? Can further evidence be necessary?

If there be any who still doubt the perpetual obligation of the ordinance, we would respectfully put to them the following questions: Is there in the law of the institution any thing which appears to *limit* the obligation to obedience to time, or place, or nation? Is not the language of the Commission as exempt as language can be, from all such limitations? Was this law ever *repealed*

by the same authority which enacted it? If it were, it can certainly be shown when, and where, and how; and we ask for the evidence.—We ask again, Has it (as the seventh day Sabbath has,) been *virtually repealed*, by being superseded by another ordinance? If so, what is its name? and whence its origin? and where its authority? We ask once more, Do not the *same reasons exist for its continuance*, as did for its *appointment*? Miraculous gifts were a seal to the commission—they accredited the apostles as messengers of God; but now the proof of the divine origin of Christianity is complete, and the miraculous powers have ceased. They have ceased, because the same reason for which they were given, does not continue. But the same *doctrinal* and the same *practical* uses of baptism continue; and why should the ordinance be laid aside? Why should it be regarded by any disciple of the crucified Saviour as antiquated, or obsolete? *Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism in the likeness of his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life.* Rom. vi. 4, 5.

P. S. The most eminent writers on the Pedobaptist side of this controversy are, *Wall, Henry, Bradbury, Bostwick, Towgood, Addington, Williams, Edwards, Miller, Evans, Ewing, Wardlaw, Worcester, Austin, Anderson, Dwight, Pond, Moore, Arnold, Walker, Beckwith, Woods, Stuart, Beecher, &c.* And on the Baptist side, *Gale, Gill, Stennet, Booth, Robinson, Haldane, McLean, Pengilly, Wilson, Fuller, Carson, Cox, Baldwin, Merrill, Chapin, Frey, Loomis, Judson, Foster, Sharp, Chase, Ripley, Warne, Hague, Turney, Howell, Jewett, Remington, R. Fuller, &c.*

THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS.

OR,

BELIEF AND BAPTISM

BEFORE COMMUNION.

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BELIEF AND BAPTISM BEFORE COMMUNION.

WE propose to submit, for your consideration at the present time, a few reasons *why our churches should adhere to the practice of inviting to the Table of the Lord only those persons whom they believe to be the baptized and orderly followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

At a time when, in consequence of our views on this subject, we are constantly assailed with the charges of exclusivism and illiberality by Christian brethren with whom we love to co-operate in prayer and other efforts intended to advance the Kingdom of Christ, it is proper for us to review the reasons for our practice. If these be found sufficient let us maintain with renewed zeal

the rules by which we have heretofore been governed. But if we have been defending a position which a maturer and more searching investigation discovers to be untenable, let us as honest people abandon it, and relieve ourselves from the imputations under which we have so long labored.

I. Our first reason for restricting these invitations to the persons whom we have designated is, that the *practice accords with the law and the testimony of the Holy Scriptures*. We mention this as our first reason, because we hold it to be the foundation on which all arguments, entitled to our respect on this subject, must be built. Whatever may be urged in favor of the practice by other considerations, we should not insist upon its retention unless it be enforced by the command of Jesus Christ and the practice of the Apostles. It especially becomes us, dear brethren, who profess to discard all merely human traditions and superstitions, to inquire, when seeking the truth on this subject.

What is taught in the Sacred Oracles? and to cleave only unto that doctrine which has been delivered by "holy men of old, speak- as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

1. Let us begin our inquiries on this head with the institution of the ordinance. It can be shown, beyond a reasonable doubt, that all the persons who participated on this occasion had been previously baptized. The administrator certainly had submitted to the ordinance. There is not the like mention of the baptism of each of the apostles. It would be unreasonable to expect records which would embrace those particulars of their history which, from the circumstances of the case, may be very properly taken for granted. We believe that they were baptized:

(1.) Because a rite which their leader deemed so important, that he submitted to it in his own person, could not have been neglected by any of those whom he recognized as his followers.

(2.) Because those who baptized many of

the converts of the Lord, must themselves have been baptized.

(3.) Our Lord would not, after his ascension, send forth men to "baptize all nations" who were living in the neglect of that which he enjoins on others.

(4.) As some of the apostles had been baptized by John, and as the disciples made by the personal ministry of the Saviour were baptized, *all* of his apostles must have been baptized.

(5.) When an apostle was to be elected in the place of Judas, one of the qualifications of the candidate for the vacancy was (we may justly conclude), that he had been baptized; and reference is made to this qualification in such terms as to carry with it the strong implication that they had all been baptized. "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning from the baptism of John*, . . . must one be ordained," &c. Acts i. 21, 22.

(6.) If a requisition was laid upon the converted Saul to be baptized before he could enter upon his work, a similar requisition must have been laid upon the other apostles.

(7.) When our Lord was preparing to receive baptism from John, he said: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." We cannot suppose that he would have chosen, as the depositaries of a most important trust, those who were willfully neglecting their duty with regard to this righteousness.

Can there be, then, a reasonable doubt, that the first Supper was celebrated by a baptized company? Whether you choose to call it John's baptism, or Christian baptism, it is the baptism which God appointed; and all present on this memorable occasion had submitted to the divine command.

2. The terms of the Great Commission show that baptism precedes the Supper. This is the law by which we are to be governed on this subject. (See Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16.) By this charter we **are**

directed, 1. To make a proclamation of the Gospel; 2. To administer baptism to believers; and 3. To instruct the baptized in their duty to Christ. If we suppose, as we have sufficient reason for doing, that the Lord's Supper was one of the things to be taught the baptized converts, then we find the Commission clearly establishing baptism as a prerequisite to the Lord's table. It will not do to say that the Commission prescribes no particular order in which we are to proceed. This argument would prove too much. For if we are at liberty to make a transposition and to teach men to observe the Supper before they had been baptized, we might by the same liberty transpose a little further, and administer baptism before there had been a profession of faith. But as no one among us will, we presume, deny that faith is an indispensable preliminary to baptism, so no one ought to dispense with baptism as a prerequisite to the table of the Lord. The order of the Commission, reported in the

same way by both the Evangelists, is not a matter of accident, but of design, and should be conscientiously observed by all who love the great Lawgiver. We most cordially concur in the views of Baxter, that "The paramount law of the great Institutor, the Commission, is not like some occasional historical mention of baptism, but is the very command of Christ, and purposely expresseth their several works in their several places and order. Their first task is, by teaching, to make disciples, which Mark calls believers. The second work is to baptize them. The third work is to teach them all other things which are afterward to be learned in the school of Christ. To contemn this order is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here?"*

3. The practice of the apostles shows that they understood baptism to be the first duty of every believer, and therefore antecedent to the Supper. Any one who will

* Quoted in "Howell on Communion," p. 49.

read the Commission, and observe the action of the apostles under this law, must be struck with their constant adherence to the order which their Divine Master enjoined. On the day of Pentecost, "when they heard this (*i. e.*, Peter's discourse), they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Here then we have, 1. The preaching of the Gospel; 2. The belief of the hearers; 3. Their baptism; 4. Their participation of the Lord's Supper; being one of those things which they were taught after their compliance with the preliminaries of faith and baptism. All this is in exact conformity with the terms and the order of the

Commission which Peter had received from his divine Master. Again, "Philip . . . preached unto him Jesus. . . And the Eunuch said, See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . And he baptized him." Here again we have the same order rigidly observed. Philip first preaches Jesus to his hearer. The latter then expresses his belief. Next he is baptized. Was the practice of Philip an undesigned coincidence with that of Peter, or did it spring from the same interpretation of the Commission? Who can doubt that they understood the *order* to be authoritative? When Ananias addressed the converted Saul, he did not first direct him to commemorate the sufferings and death of his Lord; there was a duty which took precedence of this requisition. He must be buried in the same watery grave in which

his Saviour had been laid. He had already heard and believed the Gospel. In those memorable words which entered his soul, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," Saul had heard a sermon from the skies. When his belief followed this preaching, there came the command: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Having been baptized, the same Jesus who had preached the sermon under which he was converted, teaches him, among the many things which he learned, that he must celebrate his sufferings and death. And when he writes to the Corinthians, enjoining this duty upon them after they had been baptized, he can speak with effect, when he says: "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, **that** the Lord Jesus, the same night on which he **was** betrayed, took bread," &c. Here we see the Son of God co-operating with his apostles in carrying out his own commission in

the order in which he delivered it. Paul hears, believes, is baptized, and learns that he is then to "show in the Supper," the "Lord's death, till he comes," and so teaches the churches.

And when this Saul, afterward a minister of the Cross, hears from the jailer the anxious cry—"What must I do to be saved?" he first directs him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As the next step he does not receive the Supper, though this would have been much more convenient, in the judgment of some of our friends, than what was required, but he is baptized; and one act of obedience in this case follows another so rapidly, that we see the close proximity in which Paul placed belief and baptism.

But perhaps some may say: Granted that the apostles invariably administered baptism before communion, their example in this particular, is not binding upon us. We answer: When the apostles acted officially, they acted under divine direction,

and their conduct and teaching, when so acting, are invested for us with all the authority of law. It is, in fact, Jesus speaking to us through his servants, and illustrating by their teaching and practice his own requisitions. Why do we feel safe in saying to every inquirer after life, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? Because an inspired apostle once gave this direction to an inquirer. Why do we resist the doctrine of celibacy, as held by the Romish church? Because an apostle has pronounced marriage to be "honorable in all." Why would we feel no hesitation in excommunicating a person charged with the offence for which the apostle recommended excision to the Corinthian church? Because we hold his directions to them to be inspired, and therefore incumbent on us. No one questions that the instructions of the apostles on these subjects are rules by which we must be governed; and when we find these apostles uniformly

insisting on baptism before believers are invited to approach the table of their Lord, we should hold this rule to be as obligatory upon us as though we had an express command, in every instance, from our great Lawgiver.

4. The incidental references to baptism in the Epistles confirm what we are taught by apostolic practice, viz.: That the first visible act of homage which believers paid to Christ was baptism. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul addressed them in these terms: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides I know not whether I baptized any other." The question in this passage assumes that every one connected with the Corinthian church had been baptized. Paul does not ask, "Have you been baptized?" but taking this as granted, he inquires whether they had been baptized in his name. Next he

mentions several persons whom he had baptized, and though he is not advised of the baptism of other members, his language implies that they had all submitted to this ordinance. Who, in reading this Scripture, can resist the conclusion that the church of Corinth was composed of believers who had been baptized in the name of Christ? Now it was to those who had paid the act of homage which baptism implies, that the apostle delivered the command of his Lord respecting the Supper, "This do in remembrance of me."

In the Epistle to the Galatians we find this language: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." All the members of the church in Galatia must have put on Christ. They must therefore have all been baptized. But when did this symbolical putting on of Christ occur? Was it before or after they partook of the Lord's Supper? If after they had received the Supper, why is the **fact**

ignored? Why is the apostle so careful to mention the second rite whilst he omits the initiatory ordinance of the Supper? As baptism was the putting on of Christ, surely we may conclude that the symbol was indicated so soon as the faith symbolized existed in the heart. The putting on of Christ was the act by which they proclaimed their allegiance to the Son of God. This of course would very naturally and properly take precedence of all those acts which are prescribed for those who have taken the oath of allegiance.

The interpretation which we have now given of the Commission, and of the practice of the apostles, is accepted by the Christian world at large. Though some now deny that baptism is a prerequisite to communion, there has heretofore been very great unanimity among our Pedobaptist brethren on this subject. Those who deem us so exclusive, recognize, in the standards of their churches and in the opinions of their ac-

credited expositors, the necessity of baptism before communion. "In the very depths of the Romish apostasy," says Mr. Booth, "and since the Reformation, both at home and abroad, the general practice has been to receive none but baptized persons to communion at the Lord's table." Says Dr. Wall, (History of Infant Bap., Part 2, Chap. 9), "No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained that any persons should partake of the communion before they were baptized."

In the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church we have these words: "Let none be received into the church until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized." In the Order of Confirmation in the Episcopal Prayer-book, baptism is a prerequisite to confirmation, and confirmation is a prerequisite to the Supper.

According to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith: "Baptism is a Sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church." The Lord's Supper is an ordinance "in the church"; hence, an ordinance for those whom Presbyterians believe to be baptized. It would be easy to quote from standards and individuals in corroboration of the view which is now presented. The limits prescribed for this paper forbid. We submit, in addition, only the testimony of Dr. Griffin, a learned and eminently useful minister of the Congregational Church. "I agree with the advocates for close communion on two points: 1. That baptism is an initiating ordinance, which introduces into the visible church. Of course, where there is no baptism, there are no visible churches. 2. That we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. Should a

pious Quaker so far depart from his principles as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while he yet refused to be baptized, I could not receive him; because there is such a relation established between the two ordinances that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church."

Thus, from the "law and the testimony" as understood both by ourselves and by Pedobaptist commentators, submission to the ordinance of baptism is an indispensable preliminary to an orderly participation of the Lord's Supper. If this point be made out, (and we humbly conceive that it is established beyond successful assault), it is not really necessary for us to add any thing more. Having a "thus saith the Lord" for our practice, we may submit quietly to whatever of opprobrium it may involve. Though it cuts us off from a sacramental fellowship with multitudes whom we believe

to be the children of God, and whose zeal in the service of our common Lord awakens our constant admiration and gratitude, and though it constrains us to dwell in a painful isolation, making us the "sect which is everywhere spoken against," yet we must adhere to that rule which we honestly believe to have been prescribed by our Lord and his apostles. "Let it be admitted," says the gifted Hall, "that baptism is, under all circumstances, a necessary condition of church-fellowship, and it is impossible for the Baptists to act otherwise. The recollection of this may suffice to rebut the ridicule and silence the clamor of those who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of baptism, their own principles would compel them to adopt. They both concur in a common principle, from which the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result." The hypothesis of this writer is, we humbly conceive, estab-

lished. "Baptism is, under all circumstances, a necessary condition of church-fellowship." It is therefore impossible for Baptists to invite to the Lord's Supper those who have not complied with the Lord's preliminary.

II. The next reason which we offer for adhering to our practice on the subject in question, is because, in so doing, we bear our testimony against those who depart from the scriptural law of baptism, both as to its mode and subjects. Holding baptism to be a prerequisite to the Supper, it is plain that, if we invite those who have not been immersed on a profession of their faith to partake, we recognize something else besides immersion to be baptism. Most of the members of Pedobaptist churches have not, in our view, been baptized; many others have not received even that which they hold to be baptism, on a profession of their faith—the rite having been administered at an age so tender that it made no impression on their **minds**. To invite such persons to the Lord's

table, would be in effect, to say, We believe that you have complied with the terms of the Commission and with the practice of the apostles—an assertion which no Baptist could conscientiously make. In withholding our invitation, we express the convictions that their custom of adopting infants into the church, by what is termed baptism, is without a warrant in the Word of God; and that their refusal to submit to the baptism which Christ appointed, disqualifies them for a scriptural participation of the Supper.

If our Pedobaptist brethren should say, this surely is magnifying the rite of baptism into very great consequence; can the question of the application of water in a particular way, whether before or after believing, be a matter of so much moment as to produce a separation at the communion table, of those who are the regenerated friends of Jesus? We answer, that we make no more of this ordinance than did our Divine Exemplar—we dare not make any thing less.

If he deemed it so important as to submit to it, in his own person, and that in a particular way, and when he was in the full maturity of his powers; if that baptism was hallowed and made forever memorable by the first simultaneous appearance of the whole God-head, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, to men; if the Son of God gave this ordinance so conspicuous and well-defined a place in his valedictory charge to his apostles; and if these apostles invariably enjoined baptism on those who believed; and if the rite be so important that they deem the fact of its observance worthy of especial record in so many instances; it is not easy for us to magnify it into an undue consequence, so long as we only insist upon it as the first duty of all who "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Nor do we lay a greater stress upon this ordinance than do our brethren who differ from us as to the circumstances. We would respectfully ask, What **Pedobaptist** confession of faith ignores it?

We have seen that it is mentioned in the standards of their churches. Which one of these churches, in practice, dispenses with it as a matter of too trivial a nature to be insisted upon? The truth is, that in their estimate of the ordinance, they attach to it a value greater than that which we accord. We are satisfied if it be administered to believers—they administer that which they regard as baptism to *unbelievers*—to persons at an age when belief is an utter impossibility.

If our brethren with whom we differ on this subject should say, We have submitted conscientiously to what we believe to be baptism, and we therefore claim our place at the table; we answer, That it is Christ's table, and we have no authority to invite there any other persons than those whom we believe to have complied with Christ's conditions. We rejoice, dear brethren, in the evidences of piety which you exhibit; we love to hold spiritual communion with those

whose lives abound in so many good works; but Christ has not taught us how we may hold sacramental communion with those who remain, in our view, unbaptized. It is painful to us not to meet you at the table; we esteem you for your works of faith, and labors of love, but we love the Lord Jesus Christ more. Loyalty to his commands, devotion to the truth as it is in Jesus, compel us to withhold our invitations to the Supper. By this act we say to you, We believe, in the matter of baptism, you include subjects for which you have only the commandments of men, and are satisfied with an administration which the Scriptures do not recognize.

III. Another reason for our position is found in the fact that we thus express our dissent from the practice of those churches who do not insist upon repentance and faith as a condition of admission to the table of the Lord. That multitudes of our brethren who have not complied with the other pre

liminary on which we have insisted, possess, notwithstanding, the fundamental requisites of which we now speak, we rejoice to believe. But at the same time there are churches in which satisfactory evidences of spiritual regeneration are not required as terms of admission to the Lord's Supper. In some of these churches, all that is required after the baptism of the candidate in infancy, is his confirmation by the proper officer. This rite introduces him into full communion. Many of those who are thus introduced do not even profess to be converted. That we do not speak harshly on this subject, appears from the testimony of Archbishop Whately, who says: "Confirmation is too often so mistaken and perverted, as to become an empty and unmeaning form, or a dangerous snare." ("Charges and other Tracts," Lond. 1836, p. 93.)

Says Dr. Smyth, an eminent minister of the Presbyterian church, when speaking of this prelatical rite of confirmation, ("Conf.

Examined," p. 115), "As to any serious belief in the necessity of regeneration as a prerequisite qualification, they dream not of it. They have been taught, as Bishop Mant words it, to 'believe in baptismal regeneration, and that there is no other regeneration,' and they now therefore confirm their belief that there is no other, by becoming communicants while impenitent and unconverted."

So, again, it is well known that there are other churches in which persons are invited to the Lord's Supper, that they may be converted by the ordinance. In the terms which they prescribe for admission to the Supper, though baptism may be specified, there is no distinct intimation that the candidate must have experienced the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.

To invite such persons to the communion-table, with our principles, is to say to them, "We believe that you have been converted when thanks were returned for your regeneration in baptism, we believe you passed

from death unto life: in connecting yourself with a Christian church, you became a Christian." We are not prepared to encourage their error; we are not prepared to sanction a violation of that law which, (as we have seen), requires belief and baptism to be antecedent to communion; and as we spread the table, we must throw around it the fence which the Lord Jesus has constructed, and say: "This is for baptized believers in his holy name."

IV. The last reason which we assign for adhering to our practice is, that by such a course we advance most effectively, under the Divine blessing, those great principles for which we contend. If we believe our practice with regard to church communion to be scriptural, we should be obliged to conform to it, whether our views be acknowledged by multitudes, or by a very limited number of adherents. But when the policy we adopt is obviously the most favorable for the dissemination of those doctrines which

are taught in the Word of God, this surely supplies an additional reason why it should be faithfully observed. It has often been said that, if restricted communion were abolished, our principles would achieve a much more speedy triumph. But the question of success or of defeat should not affect our action. We have but one inquiry—What is right? What is according to the “law and the testimony”? Better is it for us to fail whilst clinging to the *truth* than to triumph (as men count triumph) whilst submitting to an error.

But facts demonstrate that our views have always been most successful when we have adhered most uncompromisingly to the practice of inviting to the table of the Lord only those whom we believe to be scripturally qualified. If we institute a comparison betwixt the United States, where strict communion prevails, and Great Britain, where to a great extent our brethren recognize mixed communion, we shall discover that

our principles have progressed much more rapidly in the former than in the latter country. *e. g.*: In the year 1850, the number of communicants in the United States, of Baptist churches holding our views on the communion question, was 754,652. In Great Britain and Ireland, the total number of Baptists is reported, in the same year, to be 132,719. From this statement, copied from the Baptist Almanac of 1850, it appears that the number of Baptists in the United States is nearly six times as great as their number in Great Britain and Ireland. Difference of population does not account for the difference; for at the time of the comparison, the population of the European countries was a little greater than that of our own country. Nor is the disproportion explained by the earlier introduction of Baptist principles into this country. In this respect Great Britain has enjoyed a decided advantage. Nor can any thing be assigned in the different governments of the countries as an *adequate* expla-

nation of the fact, though we believe our government to be most favorable for the spread of a spiritual Christianity. We believe the chief cause to be that which has been mentioned. Nor are we alone in this judgment. After a fair statement of the relative advantages and disadvantages which the denomination has experienced in both countries, Prof. Curtis well concludes, in view of the superior progress of our churches in the United States, that, "under God, this has originated in their assuming an independent and uncompromising basis; their churches being formed, not on Robert Hall's plan of mixed membership, but upon that derived from the apostolic practice of making baptism a prerequisite to membership in their churches."

In our own country, our Free-will Baptist brethren practice open communion. Does this promote their prosperity? Let us see. In 1844 the whole number of Free-will Baptists in the United States, was 50,634.

In 1858 they report 50,312. Thus it appears, that in the course of fourteen years, instead of increasing, they have really declined in number. (See Baptist Almanac.) It will not do to say that this decline is due to their Arminianism; for our Methodist brethren, who agree with them in this view, do not appear to have been much hindered on this account. But whilst the mixed communion Baptists of our country have lost 322 members in fourteen years, those who insist on the New Testament requisition have gained in the same period nearly 300,000 members. If we institute a comparison betwixt England and Wales, we shall have a like result. The number of those who hold our sentiments in Wales is greatly larger, in proportion to the population of the country, than the number of Baptists in England. The Welsh Baptists, it is well known, insist upon inviting to the communion those only who have been baptized on a profession of their faith. Thus it appears, that whether

we compare the denominations holding different views on this subject, and found in different countries, or whether we compare those pursuing these different practices in the same country, the result abundantly confirms the position which we have taken.

Yes, brethren, God has blessed us whilst we have been contending for what we believe to be the truth on this important subject. Never have our principles been so triumphant as in this country. Look at your own Association. Though you have been frequently dismissing churches to join other Associations, your number is to-day nearly three-fold as great as it was twenty years ago. We believe that one source of our prosperity has been, under God, our stedfast adherence to the teaching of Christ and his apostles, respecting the ordinances of the Christian church. And "as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so let us walk in him;" let us continue to contend for the faith on this subject, which we believe to have been de-

livered to the saints; asking on this, as on all other questions, Lord, what will thou have us do?

In the mean time let us endeavor to cultivate a closer spiritual communion with our brethren of every name. Let us emulate the earnest piety, the enlarged benevolence, and the self-sacrificing zeal, which they so beautifully exhibit in the service of that same Jesus for whom we toil. Let us, as far as we possibly can, co-operate with them in efforts for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. And when they say to us, that as you expect to commune with us in heaven (as most assuredly we do), you ought to welcome us to the table now; let us remind them that there will be no table spread in heaven; and that we can have, and do have the same communion with them on earth which we hope to enjoy, in a higher and holier degree, in that bright world where

“Perfect love and friendship shall reign
Through all eternity.”

BAPTISM IN HISTORY

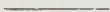
IN THE

EAST AND THE WEST.

BY

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BAPTISM IN HISTORY.

I PROPOSE to present a brief view of the testimony of history as to the act of baptism. I hope, either in the facts or in the grouping of them, to make a positive, though small, contribution to the baptismal controversy; and this is my excuse for asking the reader's attention to a subject the very mention of which might warn him to pass it by.

As the Christian church has had a continuous existence and an unbroken tradition, it may seem strange that there ever should have been any dispute as to what was one of its most important and striking rites—a rite which was supposed to secure to the subject of it regeneration and an entrance into everlasting life. The strangeness of the dispute, however, does not seem so great when we remember that

the dispute itself is comparatively recent; that it has been confined to one section of Christendom, and only to one part of that. In the East there is no controversy as to what was the act of baptism; there is no controversy among well-informed Roman Catholics: the controversy is only real among Protestants—that is, only among those who have had no close, unbroken connection with the past. Even among Protestants who do not practise baptism as originally instituted, there are very many who fully agree with the majority of the Christian world as to what the rite was.

The controversy as to the mode of baptism is not so old as the Reformation. Before that time, indeed, sprinkling and pouring had become common in the West, but this excited no controversy. The church had authorized the change, and the people had submitted to it. It was only when men began to wish to return to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures that we hear of dissatisfaction with the current mode of baptism. That this dissatisfaction was not

universal among those who revolted from papal authority is owing to the fact that many of them thought either that the mode of baptism was a matter of indifference, or that it might be lawfully regulated by the church. Calvin thought it a matter of indifference. He said, "It is a matter of no importance whether we baptize by entirely immersing the person in water, or only by sprinkling the water upon him." Inasmuch as "the sign is represented in either," the whole matter should be left free to the churches. Yet he admitted that "the mere term 'baptize' means to immerse entirely," and that "it is certain that the custom of thus entirely immersing was anciently observed in the church."* Luther does not go so far as Calvin. He tells us that the word "'baptism' means immersion, as when we immerse anything in water so that it is entirely covered by the water," and strenuously argues that immersion should still be practised.† But he did not

* *Institutes*, art. "Baptism," sec. 19.

† *Opera Latina*, vol. xxix. p. 394, art. "De Sac. Bap."

have the courage, nor did he deem it necessary, to return to the old custom. With Calvin and Luther agree the Reformers generally. Even the Anabaptists, as a body, did not at first attach importance to immersion. It was only after the principles of the Reformation had considerably advanced, and the authority of the church to change an ordinance of Christ began to be denied, that those who practised the changed rite thought it necessary to seek a justification of their practice in Scripture authority or primitive custom. We need not pause to fix the date at which this took place, but then it was that the controversy as to the mode of baptism began.* It was chiefly confined to immersionists and non-immersionists among English Protestants. The Roman Catholics had, and now have, no part in it. The most recent Roman Catholic history may speak for the Roman Catholics of to-day. Speaking of

"Ever since the Reformation and the rise of the Baptists as a distinct denomination . . . the meaning of the Greek word (baptism) has been a matter of dispute."
—HODGE, *Sys. Theol.*, iii. 527.

the ancient custom, it says: "Baptism, or the immersion of the catechumen to indicate the burial of Christ unto death and resurrection into life, was the necessary condition of entrance into the Christian church."* The opinion of the Roman Catholic Church is also that of a very large proportion of Protestant Christians. Among English scholars many have no hesitation in declaring that immersion was essential to the original idea of baptism. The almost universal testimony of German scholars is in the same direction.

Only where denominational necessities require it is immersion denied or not freely acknowledged. Such necessities being strongest in America, it is in America that the question of baptism is most warmly discussed and least candidly considered. Any one may notice how differently this subject is treated by German, and even English, and American scholars. Let the reader examine Lange's commentaries as published in this country, and he will see

*Alzog's *Universal Ch. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 207.

that the German authors uniformly speak of baptism as immersion, and that the American Pedobaptist translators often endeavor to break the force of the statements of the text. One or two examples of this may be given. In the account of the baptism of the eunuch, Lechler, the German commentator, simply states that "Philip baptized him in the water at the road." The American editor inserts two parenthetical remarks to show that the "going down" of the Acts "may refer to the descent from the higher ground to the water," that the going "into the water can determine nothing as to its depth;" and finally, that "*εἰς* (*cis*) may mean 'unto' as well as 'into.'" Of Paul's baptism, Dr. Lechler says, "He was probably baptized in one of the rivers which Naaman had extolled in his day." The American translator thinks it needful to inform us that the "identity of certain streams in the vicinity of the modern Damascus with those of which Naaman spoke is not fully established, nor is there any indication in the present passage that a sufficient quantity of

water to fill a bowl or other vessel . . . could not be found without departing from the house." In the comment on Romans vi. 3, 4, Lange insists strongly on the symbolism of immersion. The American editor—in this case, Dr. Schaff—while holding with Lange, volunteers the information that "the efficacy of the sacrament does not depend upon the quantity or quality of water, nor upon the mode of its application." These anxious and impertinent parentheses are the index of the controversial spirit. Take any number of German scholars and compare their teachings on baptism with those of American scholars of the same standing, and the case is the same. The one party easily and clearly see immersion; the other party do not see it at all, or else so dimly see it that they might mistake it for something else.

I do not remember having met with any attempt to classify Pedobaptist writers on the "mode of baptism," yet such a classification is both easy and suggestive. Their position as to immersion is almost always connected with pe-

culiar views as to the authority of the Scriptures, the powers of the church, or the nature and significance of baptism. Those who practise sprinkling or pouring, while maintaining that the original and scriptural baptism is immersion, almost certainly have very low views of scriptural or very high views of church authority. Dean Stanley belongs to the first class. With him the authority of Christly precept and apostolic example counts for nothing; the mode of baptism is a matter of taste; he would discard immersion because it seems to him "almost barbarous."* Dean Howson, with some abatements, might be assigned to the same class. He expresses a mild regret that immersion has been changed for sprinkling, and suggests our northern climate as a possible justification of the change.† Of course

* In his article on "Historical Aspect of American Churches" he speaks of immersion as "undoubtedly the primitive, apostolical, and, till the thirteenth century, the universal mode of baptism in Christendom," and also as "Oriental, strange, inconvenient, and, to us, almost barbarous."

† *Life and Epistles of Paul*, vol. i. p. 439.

our Romish and High Church friends belong to the second class. Holding that the church may lawfully change a rite, they acknowledge no obligation to make their practice conform to that of the apostles. There is also a class who contend that immersion is not baptism at all. This view is always accompanied by a strong conviction of the supremacy of the Scriptures, and of our duty to obey them literally. Those who hold it could not practise sprinkling if they believed that the Scriptures teach immersion, and hence they must deny that the Scriptures teach it. This class is loyal and logical, and has a courage that triumphs over all difficulties; but it is small, and is not likely to grow. The next class is much larger; it includes the great majority of American Pedobaptists. They admit, some of them reluctantly, that immersion was one of several modes of apostolic baptism—not *the* mode, but *a* mode. They put no discredit on the Scriptures; they do not too much exalt the authority of the church; they save and justify their practice

by making the rite general and indefinite. Hence they anxiously argue that baptism is a generic, and not a specific, act—a washing or a purification, and not necessarily an immersion. There is yet another class which it is not quite so easy to define. They are like certain “cheiropterous mammals” spoken of by naturalists: if we look at their wings, we might take them for birds; but if we have regard to their bodies, we class them with mammals. Dr. Charles Hodge (I name him with profound respect for his learning, abilities, and unspotted character) seems to belong to this ambiguous class. He says of baptism that it is “a washing with water. By washing is meant any such application of water to the body as effects its purification. . . . The only essential thing is to make such an application of water to the person as shall render the act significant of the purification of the soul.”* This is broad and indefinite enough. But in another place we find him laboring to show that, “so far as the New Tes-

* *Sys. Theology*, vol. iii. p. 526.

tament is concerned, there is not a single case where baptism necessarily implies immersion, and that there are many cases in which that meaning is entirely inadmissible, and many more in which it is in the highest degree improbable." This does not fit in with what goes before. It is only by showing that immersion and sprinkling and pouring were indifferently practised by the apostles that we can prove that baptism is "any such application of water to the body as effects its purification." If there is nothing in the New Testament clearly in favor of immersion, and "many cases" against it, we have no scriptural authority to immerse, and at least one mode of the application of water is excluded from the idea of baptism. When we read Dr. Hodge's definition of baptism, we class him with the most indefinite of the indefinites; but when we see him patiently and laboriously trying to exclude immersion from the New Testament, he seems to have affinity with that small class who feel compelled to deny immersion in order to justify sprinkling.

We venture to suggest that those who follow his plan of treating the subject might make out their case and at the same time preserve their consistency if, after showing conclusively that sprinkling and pouring were practised by the apostles, they should also frankly admit that there are several cases in the New Testament in which immersion was highly probable.

We have not space for further illustrating and justifying this classification, but that such classification can be made is of great significance. It shows that with reference to a simple matter of fact men may easily believe what they wish to believe, and, what is more to our present purpose, that those who have felt no necessity for claiming sprinkling or pouring to be scriptural baptism have not done so, while those who have been pressed by denominational necessities have made such claim. Herbert Spencer might find in this a striking example of the influence of the "theological bias."

If we turn from the opinions to the practice of Christendom, the case is equally strong.

The East has had but one mode of baptism. As Chrysostom baptized in Constantinople fifteen hundred years ago, so the Greek priest baptizes to-day in Athens. There may be non-essential differences in the accessories of the act, but the act itself is in form and substance the same. The testimony of Dean Stanley has frequently been quoted. He says: "There can be no question that the original form of baptism—the very meaning of the word—was complete immersion in the deep baptismal waters, and that for at least four centuries any other form was either unknown or regarded, unless in the case of dangerous illness, as an exceptional, almost monstrous case. To this form the Eastern Church still rigidly adheres; and the most illustrious and venerable portion of it, that of the Byzantine Empire, absolutely repudiates any other mode of administration as essentially invalid." * When Dean Stanley was in this country, an eminent Baptist minister, acting as the representative of other Baptist

* *Hist. En. Ch.*, p. 117.

ministers, publicly praised him for the candor of this statement. He must have inwardly smiled to think how easily the praise was won. Perhaps, too, he felt surprised that intelligent Christian men should think it possible for an historian of the Greek Church either to be ignorant of or fail to acknowledge the truth as to the Greek mode of baptism. As well might he be praised for confessing that the earth revolves on its axis, or that the sun is the centre of the solar system. But if the dean did for a moment have a feeling of compassionate surprise at the simplicity of his Baptist admirers, he must have checked it when he recollected that Baptists have not found candor* to be the distinguishing characteristic of their opponents, and that all men are not as familiar as he is with the customs of the Greek Church.

As Dean Stanley is so often referred to in

* I do not use candor to mean the quality which prompts a man to tell the truth as he sees it, but the higher quality that enables him to see the truth as it is. I do not impute to Christian gentlemen the lack of candor in the first sense.

connection with this subject, it might be supposed that he stands by himself. Such is far from being the case. If we want more testimony, we might find it in every Eastern traveller, in rituals of the Greek Church, and in the unbroken statements of Greek ecclesiastical writers. Neale, a historian of the Greek Church—not so brilliant, but of fully as much weight and authority as Stanley—says: “The mode of administration of the sacrament is, throughout the whole East, by trine immersion, or at least by trine affusion over the head while the catechumen is seated or stands in water up to his elbows.”* He goes on to state that according to the Constantinopolitan ritual the priest baptizes the child, “holding him upright and facing the east, and saying, ‘Thy servant,’ etc., at each sentence plunging and raising him from the water.” According to the Coptic ritual, the priest “thrice immerses him, and after each immersion raises

* *A Hist of the Holy En. Ch.*, p. 949. See whole chapter on “Offices of Baptism,” etc.

him and breathes in his face." The Armenian priest "takes the child in his arms, and immerses him thrice in water as an emblem of the three days' burial of Christ."

Neale refers to no authority for his statement in reference to "trine affusion," and no authority is found for it in the rituals which he quotes. He may possibly have had in mind a statement made by Messrs. Smith and Dwight, missionaries of the American Board. One of these gentlemen writes:* "According to the rules of the Armenian Church, I believe baptism consists in plunging the whole body into the water three times as the sacred formula is repeated; but the present mode of administering it in Armenia, we were assured by more than one intelligent ecclesiastic, is by pouring upon the head of the child, sitting in the font, a handful of water in the name of the Father, another in the name of the Son, and a third in the name of the Holy Ghost, and then plunging the whole body three times, to signify that

* *Miss. Researches in Armenia*, p. 305. London ed., 1834.

Christ was in the grave three days." In reporting a conversation with a Nestorian bishop the same writer says: "Baptism (he said) is performed only in churches, and the whole body of the child is plunged three times in the water, because John plunged the Saviour three times in Jordan. When we mentioned, however, that we had heard that they only plunge the body up to the chin, and then pour water three times on the head, his father confessed that they do so, though they plunge the whole body also when there is water enough!"* The exclamation-point is a part of the quotation; we do not know the exact force of it.

Of course it is mere conjecture that Mr. Neale had these statements in mind. But, however that may be, we may inquire what it is they prove. The first statement brings three things to our knowledge—first, that the Armenian ritual requires trine immersion; second, that trine immersion is the present practice of the Armenian Church; but, third, certain in-

* *Miss. Researches in Armenia*, p. 382.

telligent ecclesiastics affirm that before the time immersion water is poured three times on the head of the child, sitting in the water. The second statement assures us, on the authority of a Nestorian bishop, of one thing—that is, that the ordinary Nestorian practice is to immerse the whole body of the child three times in water. We were about to say that the second statement assures us of two things, but, upon re-reading it to ascertain exactly what the second thing is, we found ourselves at fault. The missionary seems to have put a leading question to his Nestorian friends, and both got, and failed to get, the answer he sought. Singularly enough, he tells us nothing on his own authority.

Mr. Badger is a more satisfactory witness. He has given us a book on the *Nestorians and their Ritual*. The office for the administration of baptism is full and explicit. The infant is brought “to the priest standing by the font, who shall place him therein with his face to the east, and he shall dip him therein

three times, saying, etc. In dipping him he shall dip him up to the neck, and then put his hand upon him, so that his head may be submerged." * Mr. Badger was a priest of the Church of England, "one of the honorable East India Company's chaplains in the diocese of Bombay." He was twice in Kurdistan, the home of the Nestorians, once in 1842-44, and again in 1850, and had excellent opportunities for becoming acquainted with them. At all events, we may safely trust the Nestorian ritual to tell us what is the Nestorian practice.

We will introduce one more witness, A. N. Arnold, D. D., who says: "The writer has repeatedly seen baptism administered according to the Greek ritual, and in every case it was triple immersion. If, as may sometimes happen, any little portion of the body is not submerged when the child is placed naked in the font, the priest, by a movement of the hand, sends a wave over it. The only instance of adult baptism that came under his knowledge

* *Nestorians and their Ritual*, vol. ii. pp. 207-8.

was that of a converted Jew, and in his case, the ordinary fonts being, of course, too small for the purpose, a tub or tank was constructed for the occasion and placed in the church. In the course of more than eleven years' service and residence among the Greeks he never heard the slightest intimation of any diversity of views or laxity of practice among them on the subject of baptism, except in reference to recognizing the baptism of Catholics or Protestants." *

I have quoted so many authorities, not because any one denies that the Eastern Church practises immersion, but simply to give prominence to the fact. It is a fact of which thousands are ignorant, not because it is difficult to ascertain or in any way doubtful, but simply because they have felt no interest in it. So far as my reading and observation go, it has had very little weight in the discussion as to the mode of baptism. Certainly most of those who contend that sprinkling or pouring was the original

* *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. iv., 1870, p. 83.

rite go arguing on as if the Eastern Church had no existence. This is partly owing to the fact that the East has for centuries had very little influence on the current of Western thought, and also partly to the fact that the Western Church has long been in the habit of regarding itself as the whole of Christendom. Western Christians have had little or no sympathy with their Eastern brethren; they have regarded them as almost as much beyond their communion as the Mohammedans by whom they have been oppressed. And yet the Eastern Church is not farther from the truth than the Papal; it has its home in the lands which witnessed the rise and first triumphs of the Christian faith; for six hundred years it embraced within its fold the great majority of the Christian brotherhood and an immense preponderance of the wealth, learning, and influence of the whole church. Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople were great Christian cities while Rome was yet semi-heathen. It was from the East that the light of the gospel shone forth

in every direction ; and, notwithstanding her terrible overthrow by the Saracens, the Eastern Church has won for Christ the great and growing empire of Russia. She to-day represents “nearly a third of Christendom—one hundred millions of souls professing the Christian faith.” Well does Stanley say that “no theory of the Christian Church can be complete that does not take some notice” of these. Surely their testimony as to an ordinance of Christ ought not to be without weight. A German proverb reminds us that “there are also people behind the mountains.” When immersionists are reproached with being few, they may remember that there are a hundred millions in the East who should be numbered with them.

The orthodox Greek Church, the Armenian, Coptic, Nestorian, all the Eastern churches, practise immersion. In the West it is different ; here the old practice has been almost entirely changed. How shall we account for this ? The difference in the practice of the East and West may be accounted for by the

difference in the history and character of the two regions. The Western Empire yielded to the pressure of barbaric invaders in 476; the Eastern continued to exist until 1453. While the West was coming into contact with new peoples, dividing into new states and empires, passing from civilization to comparative barbarism, and from barbarism to civilization again, the East maintained a continuous existence and uninterrupted civilization under one government. The laws and customs established by Constantine were still in force when the last of the Greek emperors submitted to the victorious Turk. The conservatism of the East and the progressiveness of the West were seen in church as well as in state. In the Eastern Church the Holy Spirit, as stated in the so-called Nicene Creed, has ever proceeded from the Father: in the West he proceeds from the Father *and the Son*; in the East the cup and the leavened bread were always used in the Lord's Supper: in the West the cup for the laity has been omitted and the leavened loaf

has become an unleavened wafer; in the East the patriarchs have remained simply patriarchs: in the West the bishops of Rome developed into chiefs of a great world-embracing theocracy, and, sitting in the city of the Cæsars, were greater than the Cæsars. As she changed in so many respects, there is no wonder that she changed in respect to baptism; yet there was a time when the whole Western Church, except in special well-defined cases, practised immersion, and that in such a way as to show that she regarded nothing else as properly or normally constituting baptism.

Dean Milman dates the history of Latin, or Western, Christianity from the pontificate of Gregory the Great.* It was in his time that the Western Church entered upon her career of power. In all her activities, whether of work or of worship, she bore the marks of his moulding hand. He modified and developed her ritual, created her music, and, himself a monk,

* See bk. iii. chap. vii., *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, for sketch of Gregory and his relations to the church.

originated that system of missionary operations which utilized the powers of monasticism and converted a great part of Europe to Christianity. He was the ruling spirit of his age, and in all ecclesiastical matters his advice or command was final. In reference to baptism, his letter to Leander, a Spanish bishop, became the law of the church. Before his time (I translate from a note by the editor of his collected works) trine immersion was supposed to be necessary and of divine institution; but because certain Spanish Arians used the three-fold immersion to signify that there are three divine natures as well as three divine Persons, Gregory taught that the Roman Catholics of Spain might use a single immersion. He says: "We indeed, by our trine immersion, signify the sacrament of the three days' burial, and the drawing of the infant three times out of the water represents the resurrection from a three days' death; but if any should think proper, out of respect to the Holy Trinity, to immerse a person once in the water, there is no reason

why he should not do so ; for as there is one substance in three subsistences, it makes no difference whether in baptism we immerse the infant three times or once ; the trine immersion typifies the trinity of the Persons ; the single immersion the divine unity.”* The effect of Gregory’s advice was not to change the general practice of trine immersion, but only to legalize, where it might seem proper, a single immersion. This letter is quoted by many subsequent writers, and five hundred years after it was written it takes its place among the church canons as collected by Gratian.†

In the time of Gregory the Great the Western Church already had its vigorous beginning. It took its exclusively Western character when the Western Empire was restored by Charlemagne. It was now separated from the East in its ecclesiastical as well as political

* *Patrologia Latina*, J. P. Migne, vol. lxxvii. col. 498. I use the words “immerse” and “immersion” only as the equivalents of *mergo* or *immergo* and *mersio*.

† *Pat. Lat.*, vol. clxxxvii. col. 1826.

functions. The time of the Carlovingian dynasty constituted one of the most brilliant and aggressive periods of its existence. It was at this time that it showed its greatest activity in missionary labors. During this time, too, encouraged by Charlemagne and his sons, learning revived and literature flourished. Every monastery became a school; the very court of the emperor was a school. There are now before me more than thirty volumes of the Latin Patrology, large, double-columned, closely-printed octavos, written during this period. In these volumes are many treatises on baptism. Some of these are parts of general expositions of ecclesiastical matters; some were written at the request or for the guidance of individual bishops, and some at the command of Charlemagne himself. They do not discuss the mode of baptism; they only attempt to explain its significance and the significance of its attendant rites. Baptism in that age was not a simple but a very complex affair. The whole teaching of the church, of doctrine and

salvation and Christian life, was gathered around it. Let us look a little into this matter. Here is a treatise by Leidrad, Bishop of Lyons, one of the oldest and most honored churches of Europe. It is addressed to the Emperor Charlemagne. It begins: "You have thought proper to command me to inform you, either in writing or in person, in what manner I and my suffragans teach and instruct the priests of God committed to our care on baptism and the other rites celebrated in connection with it."* He goes on to mention some of those things which foreshadowed baptism from the beginning of the world. He finds a figure of baptism in the waters of creation, in the divided fountain of the garden of Eden, in the waters of the flood, and in the waters of the Red Sea. There is a side-reference, too, to baptism in the various wells mentioned in the Old Testament. The blood and water from the Lord's pierced side refer to martyrdom and baptism. Having gone through

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. xcix. col. 858.

his rather long introduction, Leidrad explains why the ceremony of exorcism is practised over the person to be baptized; why he receives salt; why he is taught the creed; why his ears and nostrils are touched with sacred oil; why he is anointed on the breast and between the shoulders; what is meant by renouncing Satan and his works. Then the origin and contents of the creed are set forth, with comments on each article; then comes an explanation of the potency and symbolism of baptism; then of the holy chrism; then of the white garments in which the baptized are clothed; then of the Lord's Supper; and finally of the manner in which a Christian should live.* This treatise of Leidrad's, in its scope and teachings, may be taken as a representative of its class. They all express, and were intended to express, not more the opinions of their individual authors than the teachings of the whole church. They mention rites commonly practised and explain them according

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. xcix. cols. 853-873.

to the conceptions of Roman Catholic Christendom.

How did baptism appear to the Western Church a thousand years ago? With all the ecclesiastical literature of the time before us, we ought to be able to answer this question. Leidrad tells us that there were two kinds of baptism—the first, that in which the defilement of sin is washed away in the laver of regeneration; the second, that in which a man by martyrdom is baptized in his own blood. He gives his chief attention to the baptism of water. Water is the only element in the world that both cleanses and gives life. When, therefore, we are baptized in it, we are both purified and made alive. It is not, however, the water alone that accomplishes this, but the water consecrated by the word. The water without the word is simply water; add the word, and it becomes a sacrament. It is the word that purifies us with water (*per aquam*). Baptism is the image of the death and burial of Christ.*

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. xcix, cols. 860-862.

Theodulf of Orleans, a contemporary of Leidrad, breaks out in the language of ecstasy: "O glorious and admirable sacrament, which changes us from sons of wrath to sons of God, from old to new, from foul to clean, in which we are regenerated and purified, and imitate the example of Christ!" He here quotes Romans vi. 3, and continues: "Then we die to sin when we renounce the devil and all his works; we are buried with Christ when, invoking the Holy Trinity, and being immersed three times in the baptismal font, we go down, as it were, into a grave; we rise with Christ when, having put off all our sins, we come up out of the font as out of a grave." *

Theodulf finds a significance in the font as well as in the baptism itself. He says: "The font also bears a likeness to the sepulchre of Christ." The very steps down into and up out of the baptistery have their meaning. The three down are three nights, and the three up are three days; the seventh step, the bottom

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cv. col. 231.

of the baptistery, refers to Christ, the foundation of all.*

The testimony of Walafrid Strabo is important, both from his character and from the fulness with which he writes. In his work on *The Origin and Growth of Ecclesiastical Rites* he traces the development of the baptismal office from its primitive simplicity. "We must know," he says, "that believers were first baptized, without any attendant ceremonies, in streams or pools. . . . But in process of time, out of reverence for religion, the splendor of ecclesiastical rites abundantly increased, and thus by gradual developments the celebrations of this mystic laver also grew to larger proportions. Some added the chrism, which no doubt was taken from ancient custom, since in the first ages baptism was accustomed to be supplemented by the imposition of hands, as we read in the case of Peter and John in Samaria.

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cv, col. 233. These passages from vol. cv, may also be found in Raban Maur's work *On Sacred Rites*, *P. L.* vol. cxii., where they appear as original.

. . . Others added exorcism to the sacrament of baptism ; others, the consecration of the font ; others the pouring in of salt or saliva ; others the regular instruction of catechumens ; other instituted a most diligent examination as a preparation for so great a mystery.”* He goes on to give the law in reference to the formula to be used ; the persons authorized to baptize ; the age at which baptism is lawful ; the course to be pursued when persons are doubtful as to whether they have been baptized at all, or as to the profession on which they have been baptized ; the season at which baptism was to be administered ; and single or trine immersion. On the last point he refers to the letter of Gregory the Great already quoted.

Maxentius, Archbishop of Aquileiæ, has a short but significant treatise, *De Antiquis Ritibus Baptismi*. It is written to Charlemagne. He says : “ When they come to the font they are asked by the priest if they are willing en-

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cxiv. cols. 957, 958.

tirely to renounce the devil, as they had already been admonished. When, in the usual way, they have renounced him, they are questioned a second time about the creed, and when they have answered correctly, all things in order, that they believe the whole creed, they are baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity by trine immersion. And rightly is man, who was created in the image of the Holy Trinity, by the invocation of the Holy Trinity renewed again according to that same image; and rightly does he who fell into death by the third degree of sin—that is, by consent—rise through grace to life by being lifted up a third time from the font.”*

It would be easy to multiply references and quotations. But any one who will take the trouble to look through the volumes written on ecclesiastical matters during the bright days of Charlemagne and his sons will see that the testimony of a few is really the testimony of all. It is for this reason that I refrain from

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cvi. cols. 56, 57.

giving passages from Haymo's commentary on the sixth chapter of Romans;* from the commentary of the celebrated Paschasius Radbert on the Gospel of Matthew;† from the controversy of Hincmar of Rheims, the greatest prelate of France, with Gottschalk;‡ from Alcuin, the great schoolmaster, where he insists, in opposition to Gregory the Great, that a single immersion is not allowable;§ and from others. In formal reports to emperors, in handbooks for the instruction of the clergy, in historical treatises, in commentaries on Scripture, in controversies with heretics, in incidental allusions, there is one voice and one testimony.

In the investigation of historical questions one of the most common fallacies results from a concealment or an overlooking of part of the truth. Facts are not always "stubborn things;" they are sometimes the most pliant and accom-

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cxvii. cols. 409-418.

† *Ib.*, vol. cxx. col. 170 and 690.

‡ *Ib.*, vol. cxxv. col. 554.

§ *Ib.*, vol. c. cols. 289, 290.

modating things in the world. By a skilful selection and arrangement of them we can make them say almost anything we please. Hence it is necessary to show not only the facts themselves, but the facts in their relation to other associated facts. We have seen that the Western Church practised immersion in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, and long afterward. The truth goes farther than this. She not only practised immersion, but nothing else but immersion entered into her conception of baptism. We do not mean by this that nothing else was ever recognized *as a substitute for baptism*, but that whenever the people of that age spoke or thought of baptism immersion alone was present to their minds. Sprinkling and pouring were allowed in exceptional cases, but the fact that they are always spoken of as exceptions is the strongest proof of immersion as the rule. Cyprian, in his letter to Magnus, (the 77th of the Edinburgh translation), informs us that sprinkling was practised in the middle of the third century, and Wala

frid Strabo says that pouring might be allowed in the ninth. But Cyprian's letter also shows that sprinkling was practised only in the case of the sick. It is true he anticipated the position of modern advocates of sprinkling. He contended that baptism signifies cleansing, and that the ceremonial sprinkling of the Old Testament also signifies cleansing, and therefore that sprinkling might produce the effect of baptism. But his speculative views did not change his own practice, and they apparently produced no impression on the general practice of the church. What was irregular and exceptional in the days of the Emperor Decius was also irregular and exceptional in the days of the Emperor Charlemagne. Walafrid Strabo is witness of this fact. Referring to the Spanish custom, he says: "Although the Spaniards decided on a single immersion, . . . yet the older custom [trine immersion] prevailed." He then adds: "But it ought to be noted that not only by immersion, but also by pouring from above, many have been baptized, and

might yet be so baptized if there should be necessity for it; just as we read in the passion of St. Lawrence that a certain man was baptized out of a pitcher. This also happens when the size of adults does not permit them to be dipped in the too small vessels."* The imminency of death or the smallness of the baptistery might excuse a departure from the prevalent immersion. Such departures, however, do not seem to have been frequent. They were certainly not frequent enough to produce any change or mixture in the current conceptions of baptism. Strabo alone, of all the writers of this period whom I have consulted, mentions the fact that pouring was sometimes used. It is not mentioned in the formal reports to the emperor, nor in any of the expositions of church rites and ceremonies. Several writers particularly describe the different kinds of baptism—that of blood, that of water and of the Spirit—but nowhere is mention made of a baptism by pouring. That an

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. xcix. col. 862.

exceptional matter not thought worthy of mention by so many writers should have been mentioned by Strabo is explained by the character of his book ; for he was treating of the origin and growth of ecclesiastical rites.

Another fact is significant. Pouring does not, in the slightest degree, enter into the symbolism of baptism. When the significance of the rite is referred to, immersion is always mentioned or implied. Isidore of Seville, the great ecclesiastical authority of Spain, says : " Inasmuch as Christ once died for us, we ought to be once laved in Christ. For if there is one God and one faith, there is necessarily also one baptism, because there is one death of Christ for us, in the image of which we are immersed in the mystery of the sacred font, so that, dying to the world, we may be buried with Christ ; and from the same waters we emerge in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, no more to return to corruption as he returned no more to death." *

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. lxxxiii. col. 820.

We need not multiply quotations. There is no place in which baptism is made to symbolize simple purification. It everywhere carries a profounder meaning. It symbolizes our death with Christ, our descent with him into the grave, and our rising with him to a new life. These writers are particular to explain even the smallest thing connected with baptism. They pass by nothing. If pouring had at all entered into their conceptions of the rite, they could hardly have failed to mention and explain it. As they make no mention of it, the inference is irresistible that it was not currently thought of as baptism.

We may go a step farther. The feeling of the church was opposed to pouring even as an exception. In a note on a statement in the *Missale Mixtum*, a corruption of the Mozarabic liturgy of Spain, the editor says: "The rite of immersing was more in use in old times (a modern Roman Catholic writes), and the ancients were in the habit of contemptuously calling those who had received baptism

by pouring *superfusi*, *grabbatarii*, and *clinici*. The Council of Neo-Cæsarea forbids them to be promoted to the dignity of presbyter; a Council held in Paris in the year 829 prohibits those who were baptized in sickness to be chosen among the clergy. Certainly there were not wanting those who doubted whether this mode of baptism was valid or not.* It is proper to mention that the Council of Neo-Cæsarea objected to the baptism of clinics because they had submitted to it by constraint, under the fear of death; but the letter of Cyprian already referred to conclusively proves that the form of the baptism was considered irregular and by many invalid. An English Council held at Celichyth in 816 forbids pouring and enjoins immersion. This is done in the eleventh canon of that Council as follows: "Also let the priests know that when they administer holy baptism they are not to pour the holy water on the heads of the infants, but

* *Pat. Lat.*, lxxxv. cols. 465, 466, and Harduin's *Con. Col. Max.*, vol. iv. col. 1301.

let them be immersed in the baptistery, as the Son of God in his own case furnished an example to every believer when he was three times immersed in the waves of the Jordan. It is therefore necessary that this order should be preserved and kept.”* This is the emphatic judgment of an English Council against the substitution of pouring for baptism. This much is clear, but we do not find in this the full significance of the canon. Why should its adoption be necessary, and how far does its application extend? These questions may be answered in two ways. 1. It may be that the custom of pouring, when extreme sickness did not demand it, was gradually coming in, and that the English Fathers wished to condemn the innovation. If this be so, in the beginning of the ninth century the change from immersion to pouring was already begun; there was no ecclesiastical authority for it, but without authority, and even against authority, priests were practising the more convenient mode.

* Harduin's *Con. Col. Max.*, vol. iv. cols. 1223-4.

2. On the other hand, there are things in the canon which would indicate that this view of the case is not the true one. The command to immerse is very positive. It says, "Let them always be immersed (*semper mergantur*);" and the command is emphasized both by the example of Christ and the inference drawn from it. Moreover, and what is specially significant, this command is given in connection with the mention of the baptism of the sick. The inference, therefore, is that even their case was not to be regarded as exceptional. If this inference is correct, it would indicate, what I believe to be true, that the church of this time was especially careful to hold to the old ways. This very canon begins with a reference to tradition from ancient times and from the holy Fathers, and the Council of Paris above referred to was called for the express purpose of correcting abuses and bringing the practices of the church into conformity with the Scriptures and church canons. But whatever may be the full force of particular canons, we cannot

go wrong in saying that the indications all are that in the ninth century pouring was *an unfrequent and proscribed exception*.

The teachings and customs of any age are consistent with themselves. There are certain facts so mutually antagonistic that they cannot exist together, and any assertion that they do so exist is at once set aside as exceedingly suspicious or entirely unworthy of belief. The celebrated so-called Decretals of Isidore were ascertained to be false by the application of this principle. Some of them, claiming to be written by early popes, contained words which did not come into use until centuries after their reputed authors were sleeping in their graves. Some of them complained of the invasion and spoliation of church property when as yet the church had no property. Men of the age of Constantine were made to write in the language and spirit of the age of Pepin and Charles Martel. These incompatible things at once showed the Decretals to be forgeries. The same principle of criticism was ingeniously

applied to the Epistles of Ignatius. As he wrote in the early part of the second century, his writings were used in determining the spirit and organization of the primitive church. The force of their testimony was broken in a very simple way. It was said, "No other writer of the Apostolic age, and, indeed, no writer during the whole of the second century, has spoken upon this subject in a style similar to that which Ignatius has employed; and, more particularly, no other writer of this period has *uniformly* employed the terms bishop and presbyter as descriptive of two distinct and separate classes of functionaries, the bishop being of a higher and the presbyter of a lower order; and if so, it follows that these portions of the Epistles ascribed to him did not proceed from his pen, but owed their origin to a later age."* This reasoning was amply justified by the subsequent discovery of more reliable copies of Ignatius' Epistles, and as they were first known they are now of no au-

* Cunningham's *Historical Theology*, vol. i. p. 114.

thority. Why may we not apply this same principle to the question of baptism? When, for example, it is claimed, on the authority of certain pictures, that pouring was early practised as a part or the whole of the rite of baptism, having learned from other sources that such was not the case, why may we not conclude either that the pictures do not so teach, or that they do not belong to the age to which they are assigned? I do not propose to enter fully into a criticism of the pictorial representations of baptism, but only to give a hint or two which my studies have suggested toward the explanation of a subject which does not yet seem to be fully understood.

The author of the article on baptism in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* says: "In the picture of our Lord's baptism in the baptistery of St. John at Ravenna, dating probably about the year 450, our Lord is standing in the Jordan, the water reaching to the waist, and the Baptist is standing near, as if upon the bank, and pouring water from

some small vessel on the head of the Lord." I quote this passage because it fairly introduces the subject. The writer's inference from this and other pictures of the same kind is that immersion and pouring were combined in baptism.

This interpretation of the pictures does not favor either immersionists or non-immersionists; if the rite consisted of both immersion and pouring, then either the one or the other would come short of the requirement. As both parties are equally condemned by it, both may consider it with equal impartiality. We pass by the question as to the date of the pictures described, and inquire first into the correctness of the interpretation of them. The interpretation of symbolical pictures is no easy thing. Those who look upon them are apt to carry into them the conceits of their own minds. The picture "from the baptistery of St. John at Ravenna" is before me. There is, indeed, a man standing in the water up to the waist. We may take that man to represent

Christ. There is another man on the shore, who is probably John the Baptist. The second man holds in his hand *something* from which *something* pours or is poured on the head of the first. What that something is the picture does not tell. It may be water or wine or oil, or a dozen other things, for all that we learn from the picture alone. A person who believes that baptism was performed by immersion and pouring would naturally say that it is water. But is it water?

Let us look a little more closely at the picture. There is a dove hovering over the head of the Lord with its beak reaching down nearly to the vessel which John holds in his hand. The dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Is there any connection between the dove and that something in the vessel that flows upon the head? A passage from Raban Maur's book *De Clericorum Institutione* may help us to answer this question. He says: "After the baptized person has come up from the font, he is immediately signed on the forehead with the

sacred chrism by the priest, who at the same time prays that he may be made a partaker of the kingdom of Christ and be called a Christian, from Christ " (the anointed). He quotes the account of the descent of the Spirit on Christ, and continues: "Truly, the anointing of the chrism is well joined to baptism, since the Holy Spirit, who, by the impartation of his own virtue through the chrism, sanctifies believers, descended on Jesus in the form of a dove immediately after his baptism; which thing was typified by that dove which at the time of the flood bore back to the ark an olive-branch with green leaves, signifying that the Holy Spirit, through the anointing at baptism, gives to the faithful the strength of celestial grace." * In Raban's mind the giving of the Holy Spirit was necessary to the believer's union with Christ, and baptism was necessary to the giving of the Spirit. He quotes the passage: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," and then adds:

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cvii. col. 313.

“It is clear that no one who is not Christ’s can be made a partaker of his kingdom. It is, therefore, necessary to give immediate help to the baptized person with the anointing of the chrism, that, partaking of the Holy Spirit, he may not be an alien from Christ.”* The view of Raban in reference to the use of the chrism is substantially that of his age.

The intimate connection of anointing with baptism and the giving of the Holy Spirit makes it appropriate that it should be represented in connection with them. There would be a congruity in such a representation. I am, therefore, inclined to believe that if the pictures referred to, and others of the same kind, are really old and have not been changed by the hand of the restorer, the pouring there represented is a pouring of oil, and not of water. But if we were compelled to admit that the pouring is of water, unless there should be the very strongest proof to the contrary, we should at the same time be compelled

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. cvii. col. 314.

to conclude that the pictures, as we have them, are of modern design. For, in the first place, they are peculiar, few in number, and differ from the many pictures of known antiquity in which there is no representation of pouring. In the second place, they do not correspond with the conceptions of their professed age as we otherwise know them. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the baptized was a familiar conception. The symbolical representation of it in a symbolical picture is, therefore, what we might expect. But the representation in a symbolical picture of a literal pouring of water, of which the age knows, or at least says, nothing, is harsh and incredible.*

The writer already quoted touches another point connected with our subject. While

* We must again remind the reader that the explanations of "baptism and its attendant ceremonies" are exceedingly minute and circumstantial. Is it possible that writers who mention and dwell on such things as touching the ear and the nose and the giving of salt would fail to allude to so striking a thing as the pouring of water on the head of the person baptized (a sort of supplemental baptism) if such a thing had been connected with the rite

maintaining that trine immersion was the usual form of baptism, he claims that pouring was also practised. In proof of this he refers to three cases. The first is that of a sick Jew baptized with sand in the desert; the second is the case in which Athanasius is said, while a boy, to have baptized his young friends in sport by pouring; and the third is the use of *perfusus* in the Gotho-Gallic liturgy. The first two cases did not call for a serious treatment. They are probably mythical; they are certainly exceptional. It is not pretended that they represent the usual custom of the church, or that they even indicate a tendency to exalt pouring or sprinkling to an equality with immersion. No one ever heard that Athanasius did in earnest what he is said to have done in sport. The third case is of more importance. If *perfusus*, as used in a liturgy of the seventh century, means *poured*, that would give pouring a normal and not merely an exceptional standing. The liturgy quoted is found in the seventy-second volume of Migne's *Latin Pa-*

tology. The passage referred to is in the 274th column of that volume. Our writer thus translates it: "God, who didst sanctify the fount of Jordan for the salvation of souls, let the angel of thy blessing descend upon the waters, that thy servants, being bathed therewith, may receive remission of sins," etc. The word *perfusi* is translated *bathed*. In another place we are told that a common mode of bathing among the ancients was by pouring, and it is thence inferred that those whom the liturgy speaks of as bathed were bathed by pouring. The case is ingeniously but illogically put. The fallacy of it is at once seen by referring to a parallel case: A common mode of execution is hanging. Charles the First was executed; he was therefore hanged. A common mode of bathing was by pouring, etc. B was bathed; therefore B had water poured on him. The same process of argument that proves that B had water poured on him proves that Charles was hanged. But the fallacy is not the only fault in the case. If we look into the matter,

we see, first, that *perfusi* need not here mean bathed; and second, that it does not mean bathed. (1.) It need not mean bathed, for the sufficient reason that it may mean something else. Virgil, for example, uses it to mean *wash*. He says, "Hence, O Clitumnus, the white flocks often washed (*perfusi*) in thy sacred stream have led the Roman triumphs," etc.* Sheep are not bathed, but washed in a river. (2.) Having shown that *perfusi* need not mean bathed, we shall now show that it does not mean bathed in the Gotho-Gallic liturgy. It was not a bathing, but an outward washing, typical of the inward purification that was accomplished in baptism. And the context conclusively shows that this washing was not by pouring. In another place the liturgy says: "Sanctify, O Lord, these waters, as thou didst the streams of Jordan, so that those *who shall have descended into this font* may be wor-

* *Georgics*, ii. vss. 145-8. See also *Geo.*, iii. 445 8:

"Dulcibus idcirco fluviis omne pecus magistri
Perfundunt, udisque aries gurgite villis
Mersatur, missusque secundo deficit amni."

thy to obtain pardon of their sins," etc. The going down into the font does not point to pouring. What hinders us from giving to *perfusi* the meaning which Virgil gives to it? Why not translate the passage in the liturgy: "Let the angel of thy blessing descend upon these waters, that thy servants, being washed therewith," etc.? But with this translation the supposed argument for affusion vanishes.

If we compare the Gotho-Gallic with the Gallic liturgy in use about the same time and in the same country, we shall have additional proof that *perfusi* is *washed*, and does not indicate a departure from the one authorized custom. In this Gallic liturgy it is said: "Be present, we beseech thee, at the invocation of thy name. Sanctify this font, thou Sanctifier of the human race. Let it be a place worthy of the inflowing of the Holy Spirit. Let the old Adam that is here buried rise again new; let all that belongs to the flesh die, and all that belongs to the Spirit rise again." * This lan-

* *Pat. Lat.*, vol. lxxii. col. 369.

guage implies immersion. All the ideas of both rituals correspond with the conceptions of their age, and mutually agree. We find a washing, a burial, a resurrection. When, therefore, it is claimed that affusion was anything more than exceptional, the claim rests upon no authority. If the author of the article referred to would examine anew his references, I am persuaded that he would feel compelled to change some of his conclusions. In seeking for the mode of baptism at any given time we must ascertain what was then the normal practice of the church, what was the definition she herself then gave to the rite. If once in a thousand times circumstances led to a departure from the usual practice, such exceptional departures would not render the usual practice any the less the baptism of the church. To exalt the exception to the level of the rule would be childish and misleading. Because a sick Jew in the desert was baptized in sand, would we so far dishonor our understanding as to say that in that age baptism was

administered in water *or sand*? If we should ask to-day how the Roman Catholic Church baptizes, the answer would be, By sprinkling. And this answer is none the less true because in the single church of Milan the old form—the form of the revered Ambrose—is practised. If we should ask how the Episcopal Church baptizes, the answer again would be, By sprinkling. And this answer is none the less true and sufficient because an Episcopal minister will occasionally immerse. In the same way we say without qualification that immersion was the practice of the Western Church in the days of Charlemagne. To call attention to acknowledged and explained exceptions and to treat them as normal does not comport with the fairness and candor of Christian scholarship.

It is not strictly correct to say that there was no dispute as to the mode of baptism in the days of Charlemagne. There was a dispute, but it was as to whether there should be a single or a trine immersion. This dispute, however, does not appear to have excited a

very wide interest. Alcuin, so far as I have noticed, stands alone in opposing the permission of single immersion in cases where a trine immersion might give countenance to false views as to the Trinity. I do not propose to trace the steps by which trine immersion became sprinkling or pouring, or, in Dean Stanley's striking language, by which a few drops of water were substituted for the three-fold plunge into the rushing river. The growing prevalence of infant baptism, no doubt, had much to do with it. When the church was making her conquests from heathenism, and grown-up men and women were to be received into her bosom, baptism was regarded as the conscious and willing passage of the soul from life to death that it might rise to a better life. It was preceded by long and patient instruction and by fasting and prayer. The most solemn and joyous days of the year were set apart for it. It added new dignity to the festivals of Easter and Pentecost, and its elaborate and impressive ritual was full of

meaning. But with the prevalence of infant baptism all was changed. There was no longer any special day for baptism ; the baptismal service lost its meaning, and the whole rite dwindled and lost its position of public prominence. Besides, that "smallness of the baptisteries" to which Strabo refers, in the passage already quoted, as justifying pouring, became more and more the rule, and the immersion of adults more frequently inconvenient. Now, when the rite was shorn of its glory and it seemed desirable to change it, the rationalizing scholastic philosophers furnished the reasons and the omnipotent Western Church furnished the authority for the change. These reasons may be found in the seventh article, under the sixty-sixth question, in the third part of the *Summa Theologiæ* of Thomas Aquinas. There are three of them, but the three are virtually included in one. The accidents of a thing do not change its substance. The essential thing in baptism is the washing of the body with water. Whether this is done by immersion

or sprinkling or pouring is a mere accident. Therefore such differences in the mode do not destroy the unity of the rite. Here is the principle on which the change was based ; and when we have found the principle justifying the change, we need not trouble ourselves with the steps of it. And yet, while justifying the change, Thomas Aquinas furnishes the strongest proof of the old custom. It is in answer to his question, "Is immersion essential to baptism?" that he propounds his views. Why by labored argument maintain the lawfulness of sprinkling or pouring if they had long been allowed by the custom of the church? St. Thomas tells us that even in his day immersion was the more usual and safer mode. He died in 1274.*

* See *Works*, vol. xxiv. pp. 232-33. Venice edition. The reader will have a clearer view of the case by reading St. Thomas' whole argument. According to the true scholastic method, he first states the arguments in favor of his proposition and then replies to them : "Immersion in water seems to be essential to baptism, because : (1.) It is said in Eph. iv. 5 there is one faith and one baptism. Now, among many the common mode of baptism is im-

In our investigations we have everywhere met with trine immersion. The Eastern immersion. It therefore appears that there can be no baptism without immersion. (2.) The apostle says, Rom. vi. 3, 'As many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death: for we are buried with him by baptism into death.' But this is done by immersion, for Chrysostom, on John iii, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,' etc., says, 'When we submerge our head in water the old man is buried, and being sunk down is hid as it were in the grave, and then he rises new again.' It therefore seems that immersion is essential to baptism. (3.) If there could be baptism without the immersion of the whole body, it might follow, for an equal reason, that it would suffice for any part of the body to be poured upon with water. But this is not proper, since original sin, for the remedy of which baptism is especially given, is in the whole, and not simply in a part, of the body. Therefore it seems that immersion is required in baptism, and that simple aspersion is not enough. Answers: (1.) To the first argument: Mere accidents do not change the substance of a thing. The essential thing in baptism is the washing of the body with water, whence also baptism is called 'a washing' in Eph. v. 26, etc. But it is a mere accident to baptism whether the washing is made in this way or that, and therefore such diversity of mode does not destroy the oneness of baptism. (2.) To second argument: In immersion is figuratively expressed the burial of Christ, and therefore this mode is the more usual and the more praiseworthy. But this is somehow, though not expressly, represented in other modes of baptizing; for, in whatever way washing is

Church now practises it; the Western Church practised it for hundreds of years. The testimony of the church, then, is in favor of trine immersion. Trine immersion is very ancient. It was apparently universal in the days of Augustine and earlier. Tertullian is, I believe, the earliest writer who mentions it. In the 26th chapter of his treatise against Praxeas he speaks of it as if it were a thoroughly-established custom, and bases it on the command of the Lord. In the third chapter of his book *De Corona* he seems to indicate that the three-fold immersion is something in excess of what is required in the gospel. But this passage is obscure. The custom probably arose during

done, the body of the man, or some part of it, is placed under water, just as the body of Christ was placed under the earth. (3.) To third argument: The principal part of the body is the head, in which reside and work all the feelings, both internal and external; and therefore if, on account of the scarcity of water or from any other cause, the whole body cannot have water poured on it, we ought to pour water on the head, 'in which is manifested the principle of animal life.' " Nothing could more clearly show what the old custom was than this argument in favor of abandoning it.

the early controversies of the church with the various classes of Gnostic heretics. Justin Martyr and the writers before him make no mention of it. Neither our Lord nor his apostles taught it. Resting on them as authority, we must practise, not a trine, but a single, immersion.

In concluding this discussion we may say that advance has been made in the controversy as to the act of baptism. Among those whose studies have led them to become thoroughly acquainted with the subject in any of its branches, there is hardly a difference of opinion. All the evidence points in one direction. Whatever road we travel, whether the philological or archæological or exegetical or historical, we arrive at the same point. It cannot but be that the question as to the primitive mode of baptism will after a while cease to be a question. This opinion is based on two grounds. The first is the firm belief that the truth will at last be known and acknowledged. Every new accession of light makes it clearer,

and the reason and judgment of men cannot be darkened for ever. My second reason for supposing that the question as to the mode of baptism will after a while cease to be a question is grounded on what we all see going on around us. The tide of a false liberalism is every day rising higher and higher. However hurtful this may be in many respects, it has the present effect of hushing old party cries and allaying old party animosities. While it teaches us to look with comparative indifference on the positive teachings of the word of God, it enables men to see clearly and to say fearlessly what those teachings are. Its influence is seen in the recent article by Dean Stanley on baptism, in the boldness with which he would change the form of Christian rites, in the confidence with which he speaks of baptism as immersion and the unconcealed scorn which he manifests for those who contend otherwise, and in the freedom with which he acknowledges that infant baptism is not from Christ or the apostles. In all this, Stanley is

the representative of a bold and aggressive party, if not of the spirit of the age.

But when there shall no longer be a question as to what was the mode of baptism, another question will have to be considered. That question will be as to whether it is binding on us, as the subjects of Christ, to do literally and truly what he has commanded us. The Baptists, as the most pronounced representatives of a biblical in opposition to a rationalistic Christianity, will then come into a new and conspicuous prominence. They who would then hold with Christ as their Lord and Lawgiver must likewise hold with the Baptists. This "severe and powerful sect," as Stanley calls them, are something more than sticklers for an empty form. They are the representatives of a great and vital principle; they are a chief party in the question as to whether our conduct shall be guided by a revelation from God or by the deductions of human reason or taste or fancy.

Suppose the views of the Baptists should

prevail and the ordinances of the church should regain their original form and significance—suppose baptism should again be only for believers, and should be the immersion of the whole body in water in the name of the Trinity—ought such a thing to cause one pang of regret to any true Christian or to any lover of Christian culture and refinement? It cannot be denied that the significance of the rite has been greatly diminished by the substitution of sprinkling or pouring for immersion. That profound symbolism which so impressed the mind of the church, the visible representation of death to the world and life to God, has been destroyed. It is one of the strange things in human experience that Christians should feel in their hearts antagonism to a rite impressive in form, profound in meaning, venerable in history, and made sacred by the command and example of our Lord. Again, we ask, would it be a loss or a gain if all the disciples of Christ now, as in the days of Paul, should be buried with him in baptism?

A PEDOBAPTIST CHURCH

NO HOME

FOR A BAPTIST.

AN ARGUMENT

ADDRESSED TO THOSE WHO ARE BAPTISTS IN SENTIMENT,
BUT WHO CONTEMPLATE RECEIVING IMMERSION FROM PEDOBAPTISTS
OR JOINING WITH THEM IN CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

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INTRODUCTION.

SHOULD a reader of the Bible, unskilled in the controversies of the age, go forth on the Sabbath by the river side, and see a minister, after leading the solemn devotions of a large assemblage, go down into the water, and, in the hallowed name of the TRINITY, bury a fellow-being in baptism, his heart would be naturally touched with the solemn beauty of the scene. But he would certainly receive a very unpleasant impression by learning, afterwards, that the act in which the administrator had engaged, was performed by him, not from a belief of its having any peculiar acceptability with God, but in order to satisfy the erring conscience of man. He would be still more surprised if informed that the candidate, who believed obedience to Christ rendered this observance impe-

rative, had needlessly sought the services of an administrator who, so far from personally viewing it with favor, regarded it as originating in ignorance or weakness, if not in formality and bigotry, and himself neither had submitted, nor would submit to the ordinance.

The plea for this inconsistent course, by both parties, is charity. Christian men are often willing to incur odium on any account more readily than by a charge of uncharitableness to the opinions of others. It should, therefore, occasion no surprise that in the excess of unregulated Christian zeal, some, who are Baptists by conviction, are willing to throw the mantle of charity over their unbaptized brethren; and thus, while hiding the supposed nakedness of their faith, not only flatter themselves in their own eyes, but obtain great estimation with others of similar opinions.

On the same plea of charity to a "weak brother," many unimmersed Pedobaptist ministers consider themselves justified in administering baptism contrary to their own views of propriety. Paul never attained to such a charity as this course of procedure indicates. He taught those among whom he had labored, to abstain

from a course by which a brother “stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;” and with regard to the observance or non-observance of certain days, he says, “Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” He, however, knew nothing of that fallacious charity, which would foster a brother’s delusion, or become a partaker of it. *Abstinence*, from respect to a brother’s conscience, is a very different thing from *action*. When we go beyond the bounds which the inspired Apostle prescribes, so far from exhibiting true Christian charity, we betray a laxness of principle which must be highly offensive to the Head of the Church.

All Christians ought to obey the Apostolic exhortation, “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good, unto edification.” This, however, cannot be quoted in defence of an irregular administration of immersion, for few ministers who reject Baptist sentiments think there is anything “good,” or tending to “edification,” in the act of a believer’s being “buried with Christ in baptism.”

If the writings of Pedobaptists are to be regarded as an exponent of their principles, many of them believe “Sprinkling the only mode of

Baptism." The Rev. Dr. Peters has lately issued a work with this very title. Another, with extraordinary biblical perceptions, has discovered that "Baptists can produce neither express command, nor an undeniable example of baptism by immersion in the Bible." Not a few, it is to be presumed, agree with the Rev. Dr. Murray, in his opinion of immersion: "To insist on it, is like Popery in this respect—it teaches for doctrines the commandments of men."

Such writers, no doubt, believe immersion a service which God has not required at their hands, and would refuse to administer the ordinance. Others, however, professing precisely the same opinion, engage in the service; although, according to their own consciences, they are acting in a similar way to those who were guilty of offering "strange fire" before the Lord.

One writer, whom we have quoted, has recorded his opinion of immersion, that "with too many it is the one thing needful." Another writes, "the native tendency of the doctrine is to superstition and abuse." The countenance and high honors which have been awarded them

by their brethren, and that portion of the religious press under Pedobaptist influence, affords reason for the belief, however unwelcome to Baptists, that these sentiments are entertained by the majority of Pedobaptists. To administer immersion with such views, so far from being in accordance with Christian liberality, is positive wickedness. As well might a Protestant pastor endeavor to relieve a burdened soul by extreme unction, as by thus conniving at immersion, and taking an active part in what he holds is not only a "superstition and abuse," but one which tends to foster "arrogance and exclusion."

If any man is not satisfied that immersion is of Divine authority, he must believe that it is an invention of men. In this case there is awful sacrilege in administering the ordinance. The use of "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in an observance which it is thought the Sacred Three do not regard with complacency, would fill any truly Christian mind with horror. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

A sincere Pedobaptist minister in sprinkling a child, upholds an observance in which he has

faith. Although a Baptist may consider his defence of the rite altogether insufficient to justify it, he will yet respect him for carrying his belief into practice in a prayerful and orderly manner. Far different, however, is the effect likely to be produced when that minister renounces what he believes the true or preferable mode of baptism, for what he regards as but a pernicious form.

In baptism, a believer presents a penitential, grateful, and confiding surrender of himself to Jesus Christ. A glaring inconsistency is evident when a servant of the Saviour makes himself an instrument in the solemn dedication of a soul to his Lord, without any conviction on his part of the obligation, propriety, or acceptableness of the service. In the whole transaction he is an automaton. In pronouncing the form employed in baptism he degrades himself as a minister of Christ. Instead of appearing as the living minister of a living faith, he acts in a way which does little to "magnify" his office, for he is scarcely more to be accounted of in the spiritual house than the Organ in the material—that of an auxiliary to a worship in which no interest is felt. The difference is cer-

tainly in favor of the latter *instrument*. The vast pipes which are under the direction of man will give forth a harmony of sounds which causes the breast to heave with emotion, and throws a subduing spell over the soul; while the performance of him into whom God has breathed the breath of life, will only awaken emotions of contempt or pity. Far better will the lifeless Organ harmonize with its employment, than will the soul of the minister with the office he assumes.

• Why then should a Christian believer, who desires to be baptized after the example of his Lord, in order “to fulfill all righteousness,” make application to such a minister for immersion? Why thus invite him to sin by performing an act in which he has no faith, or in which, at best, he is a mere automaton, the passive instrument of another’s will, in administering the most solemn act of Christian worship under Heaven?

CHAPTER I.

**PEDOBAPTIST CHURCH RELATIONSHIP ON THE
PART OF IMMersed BELIEVERS, INCOMPATIBLE
WITH NEW TESTAMENT REQUIREMENTS.**

"Ye are not your own," is one of the first truths which a ransomed sinner must recognize upon his adoption into the family of God. Bought with a price which cannot be computed by arithmetical rules, henceforth he is to set the Lord always before him, and all his actions must be subservient to the will and glory of God. He is not, therefore, at liberty to merge himself into a body of Christians on any considerations which have reference merely to his present enjoyment.

The fact that under the ministry of any denomination he was first awakened to the truth, does not make clear his duty as to the church relationship he should form. Gratitude to those to whose labors we are indebted, may give a bias for church relationship; but the choice which is grateful to our own feelings, and seem

ingly proper, must be surrendered when it conflicts with the requirements of the Divine word.

Many a Christian has been induced to make a sacrifice of his convictions to his pleasure; but he has afterwards learned, by a course of painful experience, that happiness cannot be obtained when it is sought by the sacrifice of duty. The fraternal greetings and fellowship of love, to which he is introduced, may cause a temporary oblivion of the sentiments, in which he differs from those with whom he is associated. But the period will arrive, when the remembrance that the solemn act of initiation by which he entered into fellowship with them, was one whose significance they do not perceive, will convince him that he is not in his right place. Whatever instruction he may derive from the pulpit, he will scarcely feel at ease when such opinions as we have quoted, of immersion and those who practice it, are advanced. He has little reason to complain; for frankness is commendable in the minister of any denomination; yet this consideration will not afford relief to his wounded feelings. "How can two walk together except they be agreed?"

1. One guiding principle, necessary always to be remembered is, that *Divine ordinances ought to be observed in accordance with Divine teaching.* Matt. xxviii. 19.

In Apostolic times, those who “gladly received the word, were baptized,” that is to say, were regularly immersed, *in order to be added to the church.* Acts ii. 41. Here they were to be taught to “observe all things whatsoever” Christ has commanded. But no man is justified in uniting with a church in which membership varies from what it was in the Pentecostal church; nor is he at liberty to place himself in circumstances in which he cannot as freely utter his sentiments on baptism, as could every one who received the ordinance on that memorable day.

That society, however, with which a person irregularly immersed intends to unite, far from requiring his immersion, would feel best satisfied by its omission. It is not a prerequisite to their fellowship or communion.

The candidate, immersed by a Pedobaptist, believes immersion the Scriptural law of baptism, and, it follows, believes that the members of the churches planted by the Apostles were

immersed. It is evident that he must have the most faulty views of the relation of baptism to other Christian privileges, to think of joining any other. Although baptized to profess his allegiance to Christ, the act is not performed with a view to union with a church composed of those who have submitted to the same divine observance, but chiefly of persons who repudiate it altogether. When he shall come to know the will of the Lord more perfectly, he will see that whatever superiority he might have in his conscientious observance of immersion, his want of this knowledge greatly detracted from the value of the service.

2. Another guiding principle for a disciple of Christ to observe is, that *however important his end, he is not at liberty to sanction any subversion of Gospel ordinances.* In other words, he is not at liberty to "do evil that good may come." Rom. iii. 8.

The believer who after immersion unites with a Pedobaptist church, may find an opiate for his conscience in the thought, that by this union he manifests his love for all who love the Saviour. If, however, he believes the primitive Christians were immersed, whence did he ob-

tain a commission to sanction a departure from the original institution?*" Believers have no authority to annul, or render inoperative a single article of the constitution of Christ's kingdom. *God converts men to obey, not to legislate.*

3. No Christian, however trifling he may deem his influence, *is at liberty to favor measures which detract from the spiritual aspect of Christianity.* John xviii. 36.

Pedobaptists pursue a course which tends to obliterate the distinction between the church and the world. An eminent Congregationalist† has truly observed: "From the manner in which some have spoken and written, one is almost tempted to imagine their notion of a

* A lamented writer (Robert Hall), who directed some of the greatest efforts of his massive intellect against scriptural terms of communion, was asked for a New Testament precedent for the course he advocated. "You should not ask for one, Sir. You should not ask for one," was his reply; "they were all Baptists in those days, Sir; but a *new case* has arisen now." If, however, no new *rules* can be found for the "*new cases*" which human misjudgment developes, we must be satisfied that it is best to obey the teaching of the New Testament.

† The Rev. Dr Wardlaw, of Glasgow.

visible church to be, that of a body as different as it can be rendered from the invisible,—the latter, of course, meaning those whose hearts, which cannot be seen by man, are right in the sight of God. Now instead of this, the aim evidently ought to be, *to bring the visible, as far as possible, to identity with the invisible,—*that is, to make the visible a community of those only whose rectitude of heart in the sight of God is made apparent, or visible to men, in their characters; and *where the exceptions are the result of mistake, not of open-eyed intention.*”

Now, what tends to efface the distinction between the world and the visible church so much as Infant Baptism? The pernicious dogma, that “the children of professing Christians are already in the church.” does more than anything else to hide the spirituality of God’s kingdom. “Infant Baptism defeats the design of Christian baptism, and makes the ordinance the reverse of what it is intended to be,—it baptizes the *world* instead of baptizing the *church*. Infant baptism baptizes the *world*, but it *never* baptizes a *disciple of Christ*. Some who are baptized in infancy may afterwards be convert-

ed, and become the disciples of Christ; but **this** is in no way denoted by their baptism in infancy—the unconverted are as much baptized as they are. In all countries where infant baptism prevails there are more baptized *worldly people* than there are baptized *Christians*. The god of this world has more baptized subjects than the King of Zion.”*

4. No Christian should unite with a church *where baptism is, in his own opinion, degraded and subverted.*

* One of the missionaries of the Maryland Union Association, writes thus of his field of labor in that State: “Upon examination I found there was very little ‘world’ left—in other words, the people were nearly all members of the church, made so by infant sprinkling. This practice hinders the Gospel; as I have found by experience, the idea possessing the minds of such people that *something* has been done for them so that they would *somehow* get to heaven.”

This hindrance to the Gospel has often been seen and lamented, by pious Pedobaptists themselves. Many testimonies might be cited, but let a single sentence from Pascal tell the fearful truth. In speaking of the effect of infant baptism in his own Church, that eminent man observes: “*The course which she (the Church) has adopted for her children’s safety, becomes the almost certain occasion of their ruin.*” —See Pascal’s Thoughts, Am. Ed. 1829, p. 251.

In the beginning, baptism was a voluntary and personal profession of attachment and surrender to Christ. Of this aspect is entirely despoiled by infant baptism. If the views of those who adhere to this observance prevailed, such baptisms as are recorded in the New Testament would be rare indeed. Should a Christian of the Apostolic age now return to the earth, and witness the ceremony which sometimes takes place in edifices devoted to the worship of God, would he imagine that anything so unlike the primitive practice deserves to be called baptism? When immersed believers unite with those whose only claim to be considered baptized is, that they were "sprinkled in infancy," though they may think thus to manifest their love to all the members of the so-called visible church, they, in fact, countenance a fearful prostitution of Christian baptism. Of its extent they cannot be ignorant. The abodes of profligacy and intemperance abound with those who in infancy were baptized into the "visible church," who are not even visible believers, but visibly those "whose end is destruction, . . . and whose glory is in their shame."

It may not have been the "open-eyed intention" of those who gave them the rite, but it is so frequent a result that they must suffer from a fearful obtuseness who do not perceive the impropriety of thus degrading an institution of Christ. If, as its friends themselves admit, there is no express authority nor clearly proved example of infant baptism in the New Testament, are baptized believers justified in joining "hand in hand" with it? No Christian ought to identify himself with a custom he is unwilling or unable to defend.*

5. In a gospel church, *all baptized members, against whom no charge can be sustained, ought to be admitted to the Lord's table.* Acts ii. 41, 42; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

* Assertions are far easier than proof. A large and expensive volume was lately published, bearing the boastful title, "Infant Baptism a Scriptural Service." As far as demonstration is concerned, the title page is the vestibule of "airy nothingness;" and after passing through more than five hundred pages, the best proof afforded that Infant Baptism is a "Scriptural service" is the assertion, that those who deny baptism to babes "trample upon the strongest probabilities." Thus far, has the "Professor of Sacred Literature for the General Assembly Royal College, Belfast," fulfilled his promise to those who have purchased his costly volume.

Pedobaptists consider sprinkling in infancy, baptism. On their own grounds, they are inconsistent. It was not the custom of the Apostles to refuse to commune at the Lord's table with any whom they had baptized; but thousands are called baptized every year now, who never will be admitted to this privilege. Instead of being "baptized," and then "breaking bread," according to the Apostles' doctrine and practice, they are not permitted to touch the elements. The very lips which pronounce them baptized, fence them from the Lord's table, without trial or charge. Though said to be "in the Church," and never in any way excluded from its privileges, they are treated as heathen and infidels.* Most righteously, we admit, are

* An instance, in point, is now before our eyes. In the "Presbyterian Sabbath School Visitor," Philadelphia, Feb. 1, 1851, the following article appears as the first under the editorial head.

"CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH.

'Do you belong to the church?' one of the scholars asked another, on the way home from school last Sabbath day.

'To be sure I do,' was the quick reply, 'and so do you.'

'O no, I do not,' the other said, 'and I did not know that you did.'

'Yes, we are both members of the church, having

they prevented from taking in their hands the emblems of the Saviour's passion; but most un-

been born of parents who are members, and having been baptized in our infancy. But I wish you would hear what the teacher has to say; he is just ahead of us.'

"They overtook him, and stated the case with much freedom and simplicity. He was glad to explain to them as well as he could, the relation they sustained to the church of Christ.

'The church is made up of those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and their children. Your parents are believers, and as members of the church you have been baptized; but you are not admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper, until you are prepared to say that you love him, and trust in him for the pardon of your sins, and the salvation of your souls. The vows of God are upon you. It is your first duty to repent of your sins, and to believe in that Saviour who died for you. If you grow up in sin, you are more wicked than those who have not enjoyed such blessings as you, and if you perish in your sins, your punishment will be much greater than that of the heathen, or of the children of wicked parents who live around you.'

"The children were very thoughtful as they walked along, and the teacher added a few words as they parted, begging them to remember that, as members of the church, their account would be a dreadful one to give, if they refused to love the Saviour."

The above instance is, perhaps, the best use which is ever made of the doctrine of infant church membership. But apart from its utter want of Scriptural authority, see what a character it gives to Christian churches—a majority of their members excluded from communion as unregenerate or profane!

righteously were they baptized. The one ordinance belongs not more to Christ's disciples than the other. *Those who have no claim to the children's bread, can have no claim to the children's baptism.*

Why was this sacrilege committed? Why was Christ thus dishonored by his ministers? How can a believer dare to sanction such a prostitution of an ordinance which Christ intended only for that people whom he should save from their sins? We should grieve to see a young lady with a cross on her bosom, entering the theatre or the ball-room, for we feel that such a token should not be carried into the haunts of worldly pleasure. But how much more may we mourn to know that thousands go down into hell who have been pronounced baptized.

How much better is the course of Baptist churches, who honestly aim "to bring the visible, as far as possible, to identity with the invisible," and therefore so observe baptism according to the Scriptures, that they can make communion in the Lord's Supper co-extensive with it; except in those rare cases, in which, in accordance with apostolic precept, they "withdraw

themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." 2 Thess. iii. 6.

6. *The sincerity of those who hold error, though it may claim tenderness, is no reason why any Christian should give it his fellowship.* Rom. x. 2, 3.

They do not forfeit our personal esteem, but their error is none the less to be deprecated. On the plea of sincerity the followers of Baal deserve regard. A Christian martyr could scarcely show more willingness to suffer, than they did in their self-inflicted tortures. Before his conversion, Paul was sincere in opposing the gospel of Christ. Who are now more sincere than Romanists?

If the lack of light or reflection is considered to detract from the force of these parallels, we may ask where can men be found more sincere than literary Unitarians, or contemplative Swedenborgians? No Christian, no church has authority to fellowship error, whether it be the error of an individual or of thousands. How can baptized Christians exhibit a more glaring defection from New Testament principles than by sanctioning infant baptism? But this they do when they unite with those who ground their

right to Christian privileges on the fact that they were sprinkled in infancy.

Before showing a fellowship for this departure from the Truth of God, the candidate should inquire how many inventions of men may be adopted by a body of professed Christians without losing their right to be called a Church of Christ? If the basin may be admitted, is there not room for the Confessional? It has the same parentage, and equal scriptural authority. A Romish priest, with the passage, "Confess your faults one to another," (James v. 16,) will make a far better case for Auricular Confession from the New Testament, than a Protestant minister for Infant Baptism.

The tendency of the principles here laid down we are neither desirous to disguise nor evade. Consistently followed out, they limit those who hold them to communion at the Lord's table with none but immersed believers. To some this appears uncharitable. The often answered inquiry is reiterated, "It is the *Lord's* table; why do you exclude any of his disciples?" The reply of a scriptural Christian is founded on the fact that it is the *Lord's* table. Christ is the only Lawgiver for his churches. It is

treason to the King of Zion to intrude upon **his** prerogative. The trust which he has committed to his churches they are not at liberty to violate. It is to be their aim to keep his table *as He left it*, "till he come." If none but immersed believing guests found a place there when he was on earth, who shall annul his laws? When the hand of fellowship must be the "hand of the betrayer," who shall dare to extend it? We have no record of any persons "breaking bread" in the Pentecostal church, who had not "gladly received the word" and been "baptized." And this is all that Baptist churches require now. *They* have raised no bar to communion. *They* can throw none down. *They* do not refuse to receive any disciple who is willing to enter on the same footing as those already incorporated in the body of Christ. Of the Supper of the Lord, like the gospel feast, they can say,

"None are excluded thence, but those
Who do themselves exclude;
Welcome the learned and polite,
The ignorant and rude."

Let our brethren be just. Baptists are not alone in restricting communion at the Lord's

table to their own membership. Large bodies of Pedobaptists do the same.* A single instance here may suffice. The Rev. John N. M'Leod, D. D., thus explains the position of the "Covenanters." "On the subject of *sacramental communion*, the principles of the church are, that such communion is the most solemn, intimate, and perfect fellowship that Christians can enjoy with God and one another; that when Christians are associated together in a church state, under a definite creed, communion in the sacraments involves an approbation of the principles of that creed; and that as the church is invested with authority which she is bound to exercise, to keep the ordinances pure and entire, sacramental communion is not to be extended to those who do not approve the principles of the particular church, or submit themselves to her authority. In maintaining, these principles, the Reformed Presbyterian Church does not design to unchurch any other religious denomination, or deny the Christianity of its members. She re-

* Ample proof of this may be seen in the works of Howell, Curtis, or Remington on Communion.

cognizes the validity of the ordinances of all Christian communities who hold the Divine Head, and the plenary inspiration of his word. She rejoices to know that these contain many of the saints of God, who have fellowship with him and with one another at the table of the Lord, and she is willing to co-operate with them to the extent of her ability, in promoting the common Christianity. But she does not feel at liberty to allow every man to be the judge of his own qualification for sealing ordinances, to dispense these ordinances to such as do not assent to her religious principles, or whom she could not submit to her discipline were they found violating their Christian obligations."

In most respects the ground here taken is that which the Baptist denomination occupies. If a Presbyterian can advance arguments which relieve him from odium, in declining church communion with those who have received the same baptism as himself, surely these arguments have accumulated force when applied by a Baptist to the case of those who, in his view, favor an entire subversion of Christian ordinances.

The objections which are made against this

scriptural and consistent communion are not always made in sincerity. Many persons who "illiberally contend for liberality," and indulge in multiplied censures with respect to Baptist exclusiveness, will pass an edifice in which a church assembles with whom they might commune, without manifesting the least desire to show their fellowship with them at the Lord's table. Such inconsistency can only be accounted for by the fact that, like our first parents under temptation, they desire what is forbidden, and forbidden, too, by the same authority. That authority shields *us* from the charge of sectarianism.

Yet, let no one imagine that there is anything in itself pleasant, in the stand which Baptists feel compelled to take. Only allegiance to the King of Zion could keep them there. It would be far more pleasant, could they with a clear conscience, cordially merge themselves with the rest of the Christian church. BUT THE TORCH OF LOVE CANNOT BE APPLIED TO THE SACRIFICE OF DUTY. That is a false liberality which, for the sake of union, would resign the positive commands of Truth. The desire for association is not less powerful in our hearts

than in the hearts of others, but it cannot annihilate our obligations. The principles which guided the Apostles, *we* may safely follow whithersoever they lead. "Once right, they are for ever right. Anywhere right, they are everywhere right. They keep a course like the luminaries of heaven. They witness against the wrong-doer. Their straight line exposes the contrast of the crooked generation. They constitute a standard of appeal, amidst the caprices of fashion and the meannesses of compromise. They stand as a sea-mark, against which the waves only dash themselves to foam."

Instead of forming church relationships, where Christ's authority must be trifled with, far preferable is the conduct of the disciple who, not fearing the misconception of his motives, is able to say, "I dwell among mine own people." A few years since a Christian man, whose early training and predilections were all in favor of infant sprinkling, was encouraged to make a thorough examination of the Scriptures on baptism, by hearing a minister remark that "immersion was not so much as named in the New Testament." Prayerful study made it evident to his mind that infant sprinkling was

the invention of man, and the immersion of believers the only Christian baptism. On his return from being baptized by a Baptist minister, the Pedobaptist minister, whose labors he had previously greatly valued, waited upon him, and in the course of conversation remarked, "Well, *now* I hope you are satisfied, and will sit down with us and make yourself happy." His reply was, "No, I am now more unhappy in your connexion than before, and cannot continue with a church which I conscientiously believe to be in error; for I am now a Baptist in principle and practice, and intend to carry out my belief." Christians of any denomination would honor a man who thus preserves his fidelity to his convictions, and lifts up his testimony for Truth.

The bitter consequences of the opposite course will more clearly appear in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER II.

IMMERSED BELIEVERS IN UNITING WITH PEDOBAPTIST CHURCHES DISHONOR THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES, AND TAKE PART IN THEIR OWN DEGRADATION.

TRUTH is a costly article, and when a Christian has bought it, he is not at liberty to hide or sell it. Prov. xxiii. 23. He is but a trustee. It is his duty to pass it on, as he received it, to bless the world. An immersed Christian, in forming church relations with Pedobaptists, sacrifices a portion of the Truth. He dishonors the principles he professes, and after all his steadfastness, in adhering to immersion as the law of Christ, shows a very poor estimate of it indeed.

1. One condition of his membership in a Pedobaptist church, sometimes expressed but always implied, is *silence on the subject of baptism*.

Such persons are not at liberty to impair the comfort of their fellow-members by awakening

in their minds any doubt as to whether they have been baptized. The Apostle enforced the obligations to holiness from the fact of baptism, but they must not venture on a similar course. Conquerors always regard the patriotic songs of a vanquished people as mischievous and revolutionary, and forbid their use. An immersed member of a Pedobaptist church must submit to similar discipline. He will soon repent his temerity if he uses any "plainness of speech" about baptism. His lips are forbidden to speak a word which conjures up what so much tends to disconcert his fellow-members. Though the church may not seem very inflammable, there are "words that burn" when uttered by some tongues. Baptism is one of these, and it is virtually proscribed. If any one's affections are so interested in the subject that he cannot hold his peace, nor refrain from advocating immersion in the case of others, he will soon find himself in a very unenviable position. He must show his penitence by observing

"silence,—deep,—unnatural,—like
The quiet of the grave,"

or his intractable course will alienate his breth-

ren from him; and, if not excommunicated, he will know little of the joys of a spiritual home.

2. As far as an immersed member of a Pedobaptist church has the means and the disposition to give, *he contributes to the support and extension of Pedobaptist institutions and sentiments.*

It may be that the Gospel is about to be sent to a heathen nation, who have never been blessed by the beams of truth. A baptized believer, we naturally conclude, desires they should have the ordinances among them agreeably to the mind of Christ. But will it be so? Is *he* not contributing to a different result? He knows that so far as Pedobaptist missionaries go, so far they carry sprinkling instead of immersion; and that, as soon as possible, infants will receive the rite.

Who that is at all acquainted with the mischiefs which the controversy has produced in our own land, and the fearful extent to which it has diverted the energies of Christians, desires to plant the same controversy on what is now heathen ground? Yet the Baptist member of a Pedobaptist church will help to forward

this result. In his own case he received his convictions of the propriety of believers' immersion from the Bible. When the Scriptures shall be given to the heathen, although the ordinance may be veiled in an "unknown tongue," yet still, without greatly mutilating the truth, believers' immersion will shine forth. The same Spirit of Truth who enlightened ROGER WILLIAMS, ADONIRAM JUDSON, and many others, in the midst of Pedobaptists, may lead some convert to see the importance of observing the ordinances as they were first delivered to the churches by Divine authority. Then will the fierce sirocco of controversy sweep over the fruitful fields reclaimed from heathenism. It may be but a small amount which an immersed believer has contributed to this result, but he is not blameless. He cannot escape on the plea that it is better to give the heathen the Gospel with a few errors, rather than not at all, because he well knows he might have contributed through institutions in which Divine ordinances would not be made void by human tradition. In that case he would not have given his aid to nourish a plant which our Heavenly Father hath not planted, and thus he would not have to la-

ment that he was helping to implant errors which so much time, talent, and energy are required to uproot.

Nor would he have the sin of helping to give God's word, with baptism, hidden, marred, or mis-translated. In nearly every Pedobaptist church, contributions are made to a Bible Society, whose translations, in many instances leave the heathen with as little clue to the meaning of baptism as possible. If an error is even uttered from the pulpit, its influence is comparatively limited; but where, as the result of deliberate action, it is propagated from the press, it may deceive the nations for ever. Those who thus mystify baptism may sincerely disclaim all intention to teach error; but the course they pursue shows their unwillingness candidly to study the meaning of the term, and then give to the world—whatever conclusion they reach—that definition which they honestly believe is Truth. Now, there is no investigation of the subject. It is purposely involved in mystery. How can an immersed disciple inflict greater dishonor on his own principles, than by forming a fellowship where he will aid such a system of concealment, or perversion?

3. The practice of a Baptist member of a Pedobaptist church, provided he has a household, *does not agree with that of other members.* His children will not be sprinkled. They will only have, like the children of other Baptists, a prayerful dedication to God daily.

If a minister believes the principles generally maintained by Pedobaptists—so well expressed by Dr. CLARK—that infants “are sanctified by being born of believing parents,” and are “already, in some sense, within the limits of the church and of the covenant of promise,” can he think it a trifling omission? How can any man, who believes infant baptism a divine institution, be a party to the admission of any persons into church fellowship whom he has reason to believe will neglect the observance by which the “seed” of believers, in his views, are made “partakers of the benefits of the covenant of grace.” Are not such parents, to his view, guilty of sin in depriving their children of so distinguished a privilege? Ecclesiastical standards are not set up, to be taken down just when it suits convenience. When principles are so little valued that men are not prepared to

abide by them in any event, the sooner a divorce is made the better.

4. Immersed parents who unite with unbaptized churches *expose their children to influences prejudicial to their spiritual welfare.*

Those who desire to foster right religious influences in the young, find that the impressions they receive of ministerial character have a very powerful bearing for evil or for good. Everything which depreciates a minister in their esteem, will detract from the power of the truths he presses on their regard. When infants are sprinkled, the children of immersed parents hear the minister they have been taught to love and revere, enforce a tradition of men, virtually nullifying their own parents' baptism. Parents, if they have any proper sense of responsibility to Christ, must vindicate his institutions. It will become their duty to show their children not only the mode of baptism, but to teach them that, like every other religious act, it requires that we "*obey from the heart* the form of doctrine delivered to us." When, however, an attempt is made to correct the erroneous impressions which the minister would

leave, a sceptical and captious disposition may be encouraged. Will not the opinion be formed, that a minister who is mistaken in one matter, may be wrong in another? Saving verities, when proclaimed by him, may be discredited, and, instead of receiving with meekness the engrafted word of God, children may try every discourse by their own limited knowledge. Here is one evil effect of injudicious church relationships, and who can tell how far this evil may extend?

Parents who act thus inconsistently, may exercise an injurious influence in another respect. They will partake of the Lord's Supper in the company of those who are unbaptized, and their children will be taught, by this act, that, though immersion is a command of Christ, yet when neglected, the omission is of very trivial importance. However active the consciences of the parents may have been on the subject of baptism, the consciences of their children will be blunted. Whereas, had they been accustomed to mingle in the worship of those who insist that baptism is for him "that believeth," they could not escape the conviction that their remaining unbaptized indicates the

absence of saving faith, and a constant exposure to perish in their sins. Mark xvi. 16.

5. It is remarkable that those Pedobaptist churches whose pliability is so extreme, that they adopt all modes according to request, should generally *refuse immersion to those who were sprinkled in infancy.*

The man who received sprinkling in infancy, must keep it, however unwillingly, after he becomes a believer. while he who was born of ungodly parents has his own choice—sprinkling, pouring, or immersion! The child of the reprobate has privileges superior to the child of the godly! He who has parental negligence on his side, may well congratulate himself, if he desires, without repudiating the act of an honored parent who had them sprinkled in infancy, to “put on Christ” scripturally. The effect of this system will be, that many who have been made to dispense with baptism, will feel unwilling to thrust their children into like perplexity, and, therefore, will leave them unsprinkled. Pedobaptists thus give a premium to those who despise their own customs, and make a breach in their own walls.

6. It is expected that members of any church

will be able to defend the fundamental principles by which their fellowship is regulated.

Membership in a Pedobaptist church, of course, as far as a ceremonial prerequisite is concerned, is based on infant baptism. Here, then, the Baptist believer of such a church is involved in a serious dilemma. He may be called upon to defend the practice of his church, not only by Baptists, but by parties from whom they are wide as the poles asunder. Let a Romanist ask him to show scriptural authority for this observance. As a member of a Baptist church he could show he was in no way identified with it; but as a member of a Pedobaptist church, he is shorn of his strength. He must defend a custom in which he does not believe, or let it appear that he clings to a church whose principles will not bear inquiry. It is useless for him to plead his own immersion as a believer, when his antagonist can reply, "But your church baptizes infants—does it not?"

We are not drawing upon fancy for arguments. Romanists know the weak point of their opponents. They delight to torture a Protestant Pedobaptist by pinioning him to the Bible with respect to infant baptism. In a

public discussion, which from the learning and ability of the parties engaged, excited great attention, the Roman Catholic inquired of the Protestant champion, who vauntingly held forth the Bible as his only rule of faith, "Where, in that book, is to be found one word relative to the baptism of infants? I ask, unless Tradition comes to the rescue of my learned friend, by what refining ingenuity will he call upon the Bible to protect him in baptizing infants that cannot give the answer,—that cannot exclaim, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?'" The discomfiture of his opponent was complete. The Romanist turned to the Baptists then present, and remarked, in reference to Pedobaptist inconsistency, "These men, in order to confute us Catholics, take up the Bible and proscribe Tradition; but in order to confute you, they throw away the Bible, and take up Tradition as the standard of their faith, the confounder of their enemies."

Is there a Baptist who would expose himself to such rebuke? If he cannot defend infant baptism, why should he join with Pedobaptists? His fellow-members may defend themselves honestly with respect to the observance, but he

cannot. He must degrade himself in his own estimation, or in the estimation of others. He must be unfaithful to his conscience, or unfaithful to his church.

7. A Baptist *cannot develope his gifts in a Pedobaptist church.*

The peculiarity of his views will in general prevent his sustaining any office. As well might a Jew aspire to a distinguished station in Russia, as for an individual holding to immersion to think of being a minister among Pedobaptists. Any young man, whatever his piety, talents and acquirements, whose belief extends no farther than that immersion is the *preferable* mode of baptism, will find this single opinion entirely debar him from the ministry. Pedobaptist ministers instinctively feel, "It is not safe to let him in."

Not only ought there to be deep reflection on the part of any person who believes in immersion, whether it is right for him to unite with a denomination in which his sentiments would prove a hindrance to any individual attaining to the ministry; but it also deserves serious consideration from the men of piety in those churches, whether, whatever the prospect of pre-

sent usefulness, they ought to encourage young men who, there is reason to believe, may afterwards prove suitable for the Gospel ministry, to place themselves in a position which must occasion such serious perplexity.

8. Pedobaptist ministers, as far as possible, *dissuade candidates for church fellowship from immersion.*

Although they admit that it is *not* unscriptural, they will use every plea which their ingenuity can invent, so that the converts may recede from primitive ground. They will lead people many miles from Jerusalem to water their cattle, and assuage their own thirst, rather than admit that "much water" was required for baptism. In the face of demonstrated facts, they will assert the impossibility of immersing three thousand converts at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. They can invent an ingenious hypothesis, by which they will prove a person can be "buried" without being covered over.

Nor is this the worst. We blush to tell truth so stumbling to our brethren, as we must tell of *some* at least. If they have a young lady to deal with, they will strive to influence her

womanly nature by considerations of the “indecentcy” of being baptized as Jesus Christ was. When they have thus reasoned, ridiculed and distorted the ordinance, then, perhaps, rather than lose the convert, they will say, as did one who occupies a highly respectable position, “Well, if nothing else will satisfy you, I’ll *douse* you.” Now, while the person is to be pitied, who would submit to be baptized by persons who thus scoff at and caricature the Divine ordinance, what measure is there diminutive enough to show the dwarfishness of attainment—literary and spiritual—of the men who adopt such arguments?

Ministers who thus undertake to immerse, certainly compromise their own character for purity of heart. A recent circumstance affords an illustration. A young lady, belonging to a highly respectable family, having been, as she trusted, brought to the knowledge of the truth, was impressed with the Divine authority of immersion, and, therefore, desired it in her own case. She conversed with a Pedobaptist minister on the subject. He used the common argument for the propriety of sprinkling, and en-

deavored to show that immersion was unnecessary. He had directed every arrow in his quiver against the ordinance but one. His visitor was a young lady. She was modest. He thought he could not fail to hit his mark. "It is not decent for a young lady to go into the water with a man." This did not move her. "To the pure all things are pure." Unwilling to lose her from his church, the minister determined to make a last effort to retain her. "If you still insist upon being immersed, allow me to *offer my services*." Patiently had his visitor endured his behaviour hitherto, but now he appeared so degraded that this was no longer possible. Rising in all the majesty of womanhood, she addressed him as follows: "And would *you* 'offer' to do an indecent thing to *me*, Sir? I have discovered a new feature in your character. I did not think *you* would do an indecent thing, sir." Let those who can, form an opinion of the feelings of the man whose insolent modesty was thus rebuked. And let them not fail to appreciate the moral deducible from such a circumstance. A minister who assails immersion on the score of indecency, lays himself open to imputations of immodesty. A

spectator of a baptismal scene in which such a clergyman officiates, might well feel justified in using the tone of indignant remonstrance, and exclaiming,

“I blush for you!

Men of your quality, expose your fame
To every vulgar censure.”

Other considerations might be adduced to sustain the ground we have taken, but the mortifying facts already presented—that immersed members of Pedobaptist churches are expected to sustain sentiments they reject, and observe a servile silence as to those they do hold; that their children are exposed to influences prejudicial to their spiritual welfare; that their practice does not agree with that of other members, and must lead to disorder and rebuke; that their principles are a disability to holding office, and are even subjected to the imputation of indecency by Pedobaptist ministers—are sufficient to prove the dishonor they put on their own views of truth, and the degradation they incur by such a union.

CONCLUSION.

FROM the inquiry we have now prosecuted we believe it is evident, that while the administration of immersion by those who have not themselves received the rite, is inconsistent and indefensible, still more so is the course of the person thus baptized. Though manifesting, by observing the ordinance, an attachment to the primitive institution, yet by receiving the ordinance at the hands of an unimmersed minister (who has never been baptized as a believer,) and with a view to union with a church, the majority of whose membership have never been baptized as believers, he by the same act professes Truth and sanctions Error. He clasps the Bible to his heart, and salutes Tradition. Into the very Jordan he seems to carry a basin; for while rejecting sprinkling, a sprinkled minister officiates. Though baptized on his own personal

profession he countenances a proxy faith. He cannot believe that such a baptism occurred in apostolic times.

That there should be strong affections existing in the mind, towards a minister, by whom spiritual blessings have, under God, been communicated, does not excite surprise. There is however reason for gratulation, that notwithstanding this, many clearly perceive their duty. The number of persons who yearly leave the churches in which they have been irregularly immersed, and seek union with Baptist churches, affords ample proof that a Pedobaptist church can be no home for those who adopt believers' baptism. The "sophist's rope of cobweb" may be twined with great ingenuity, but the Christian who has been led to see the true mode of observing Christ's ordinance, will soon perceive how rotten is any line of argument which tends to place him in church fellowship with those, who, as far as their influence extends, endeavor to bring into contempt the baptism of Jesus, to which he has delighted to submit.

As to the *validity* of the baptisms which such persons have received, it is not our desire to intermeddle. Many believe that Paul re-baptized

the twelve at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 1-7), because their gross misconceptions vitiated the ordinance. Those skilled in casuistry must decide what extent of ignorance renders a re-baptism expedient. But it is evident that when persons have views materially defective, their baptism, however sincere, loses all claim to regard as a Divine service. On this ground, probably, there is frequently more reason for re-baptism than the disability which applies to the administrator.

That it is the duty of those who prize primitive institutions, in every consistent manner to discountenance these irregular immersions is evident, if for no other reason, because they are administered upon principles which have an intimate affinity to Popery. There is the very spirit of Popery in the administration of the ordinance, without any necessity, by an unimmersed minister. Whence did the idea arise that it is fitting for men to administer to others, rites and ceremonies which they do not observe themselves? It can be attributed to none but "the Man of Sin." When Protestants thus act, they infringe the patents of the Papacy. This doctrine may suit the slaves of the Vati-

can, but will it be endured by Christ's freemen? We trust not. Such priestly assumption must receive the severest reprobation of intelligent Christians.

In closing, we congratulate the friends of Truth upon the "signs of the times." In the period in which our lot is cast, it is evident that it is high time for every spiritual house to be set in order. A reason must be given for every practice and observance. The hope may be entertained that infant baptism will not long exert its blighting influence. The mere fact that so many of its advocates are willing to immerse believers, shows the slightness of its hold upon public esteem.*

Nothing will gain currency now which has not the superscription of Truth. "Every thing is in the crucible, in this age." The issue is not

* Pedobaptists advocate sprinkling as sufficient for all the purposes of the ordinance. If sprinkling is sufficient, and of equal authority, why should they sanction a departure from its observance? The Pedobaptist administrator throws contempt upon his own baptism. A spectator of his proceedings is justified, in believing that so unusual a course would not be adopted if it had not the best of arguments in its support. He is not unlikely to inquire, "has sprinkling like evidence in its favor?"

doubtful. "Eternal Truth will gain the supremacy—all temporal plausibilities will perish."

The baptismal controversy is not ended. *It has to do with all that is spiritual and voluntary in religion.* For the sake of Christian union an attempt may be made to coffin and bury it, and "Non-essential" may be inscribed upon its tomb. But it will rise again. As God has made this ordinance so prominent in his Word, he will not allow it to be so lightly regarded among his people. There can be no real alliance among Christians, if any portion of His will must be put out of sight in order to form it.

There will yet be union among the people of God, but it will be union in the Truth. It is only as Christ dwells in his people that the breaches of Zion will be healed, and that they will become "perfect in one." The more His presence is individually realized, the nearer shall we be to the settlement of this vexed question.

One great end of those who desire the return of a spirit of union and love among the disciples of our Lord is, to cherish a spirit of free inquiry. "If any man will do His will, he

shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." Conviction depends not alone upon the nature and amount of evidence, but upon the disposition of mind with which a subject is examined. When a man, with his own predilections and prejudices, gives himself to the study of baptism, or any other controverted subject in which he may be in error, it is no wonder if he rises up with only increased bitterness against the arguments which conflict with his own cherished views.

Many satisfy themselves with the idea that Baptists are unlovely in practice, without inquiring what makes their practice appear unlovely. If they would do this, they might learn that what is deemed exclusiveness, would have been unnecessary had all Christians "kept the ordinances as they were delivered." It is matter of little surprise that those whose minds are thus prejudiced should fail to be convinced. "Honest impartiality and earnest desire to know the truth for its own worth, are no less rational and necessary, as instruments for its acquisition, than exclusive investigation and decisive argument. Without them, in vain are men dazzled by the concentrated blaze of evidence.

Evidence can influence only as a moral means; but what are moral means, without a disposition to use and improve them? The Jews and Gentiles of Apostolic times wanted neither evidence of the truth of Christianity, nor diligent research, yet they remained unconvinced, because morally unfitted for being convinced." "They loved darkness rather than light." They failed to comply with the exhortation, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

Prejudice and pride often dwell unconsciously in the bosoms of sincere Christians. Like heavy vapors in the air, they darken the keenest eye, and chill the warmest heart. We see this in such a man as Nathaniel, "an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." But a day of purer light is promised. It already begins to dawn.

As a humble and teachable spirit shall be more generally diffused in the Christian world, the ecclesiastical atmosphere will become clear, and no longer sustain those clouds which now so often obscure the vision of our holiest men. Then, true to their great Commission, the disciples of Christ will perceive, that, like the glo-

rious Gospel, whose leading facts it is designed visibly to embody, Immersion is adapted to men of every nation, kindred and tongue, inhabiting every zone of the earth—even though they find a home beneath the burning fires of a tropical sun, or amid the perpetual snows of an arctic winter.*

* Let it not be thought that the above statement is exaggerated. It is well known that all the great Reformers of the Sixteenth Century, freely admitted that Immersion was the meaning of the original word, and also the primitive practice. But they pleaded for a liberty of change *to suit the climate*. This plea is unsound. 1. It rests on a false assumption of power in the Church. 2. It opens the door for other innovations. 3. It is without support from any real necessity: as the uniform practice of the Greek Church demonstrates. 4. It is acquiesced in, mainly from custom, convenience, or taste, and therefore in all such cases, is not “the answer of a good conscience towards God.”

Even were it true, that Immersion is impracticable in a few places on the habitable globe, how could this excuse Sprinkling in mild and temperate climates like ours? Every year, in the United States, more than fifty thousand persons professing faith in the Redeemer, are immersed, without the slightest injury—often to the awakening of the unconverted. What fact in Science is better proved than the perfect safety of Immersion? Immersion is *actually practised now*, by the Baptist Missions of the Indian Archipelago, *directly under the heat of the Equator*; and by the Russian Greek Church amid the inhospitable wastes of Siberia—*the coldest regions inhabited by Man*.

J. N. B.

Human tradition shall then no longer mar the significant symbols of the Christian's faith.—“Then shall the offering of his people be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years.” Intelligent Manhood shall then, in the waters of baptism, present its voluntary and reasonable service of a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” Childhood too shall be there, but it shall be Childhood “taught of the Lord,” and bright with the unfading “beauty of holiness.” Then shall “the churches have rest” from controversies more paralysing than persecution; “and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, be multiplied.”

THE END.

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